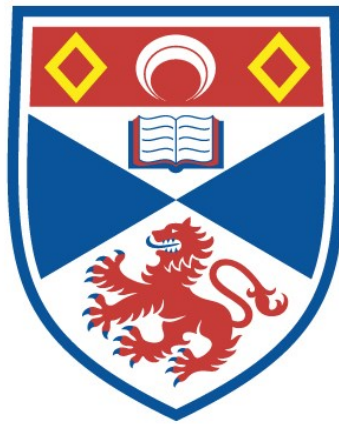


THE MOBILISATION AND TRANSMISSION OF MEMORIES
WITHIN THE PIED-NOIR AND HARKI COMMUNITIES,
1962-2007

Claire Eldridge

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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The Mobilisation and Transmission of Memories within the *Pied-Noir* and *Harki* Communities, 1962-2007

Claire Eldridge

**This thesis is submitted in requirement for the degree of PhD at the University of St
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August 2009**

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Abstract

Focusing on the legacies of the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62), this thesis challenges the perception that this was the ‘war without a name’ by exploring the ways in which memories have been preserved, mobilised, and transmitted by those who experienced the conflict, but who have generally operated under the radar of public consciousness. In particular, it examines the *pieds-noirs*, the former European settlers of Algeria, and the *harkis*, Algerians who fought for the French as auxiliaries during the war. Finding their lives in Algeria untenable upon independence, both populations migrated *en masse* to France where they have organised collectively as diaspora communities to challenge the hegemony of official narratives in order to legitimate their own interpretations of this contentious past. The purpose of such an investigation is to re-evaluate the conventional historical periodisation of a ‘forgotten’ war that made a dramatic return to public attention during the 1990s by revealing a continual presence of memory and commemorative activity within these communities. Through consultation of a wide range of sources, including extensive use of previously neglected audiovisual material, the historical recollections of these two communities are reconstructed in detail and examined from a comparative perspective. This thesis also seeks to analyse and historicize the present *guerres de mémoire* phenomenon whereby as the public profile of the war has risen in recent years, the different historical interpretations held by groups such as the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* have increasingly come into open conflict, particularly over the issue of commemoration with each seeking to see their version of the past enshrined in official rituals and monuments. Finally, the thesis offers new historical context intended to contribute to enhancing understanding of the ongoing process by which France continues to ‘face up’ to its colonial past and deal with the complex contemporary legacies of this era.

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Although it is a cliché, it is also true that this thesis was only made possible by the help and support of a great number of people. My thanks must firstly go to Stephen Tyre who, as my supervisor, has been a constant source of knowledge and guidance. Within the School of History I would also like to express my gratitude to Michael Bentley, Frank Müller, and Bernhard Struck for the interest they have taken in my research and the advice they have offered along the way.

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On the other side of work I have been lucky enough to find many people, often in unexpected places, who have made this whole experience far more enjoyable. I therefore owe a great deal to Naomi and Malcolm, Linda and Mike, Tessa and Wojtek, Katie, Giora, Elizabeth, Rob, Sarah and, last but not least, Sara who has been a particularly invaluable source of support in the past few years. I also count myself lucky to know Tony Williams and to have known his wife Pauline, who I will always remember for her kindness to me. And then there is Owen, who puts everything in perspective.

However, it is my family to whom I owe the most. My brother, who I admire more than I would ever let him know; my Dad, whose creativity has taught me to look at the world from new perspectives; and my Mum, who is my role model and my best friend. Sadly my Grandma did not live to see the completion of this work, but her influence has indelibly marked every page, as it has every part of me. I dedicate this thesis to her.

List of Abbreviations

Associations and Organisations

AAE	Amicale des Algériens en Europe
AFMRA	Association des français musulmans rapatriés de l'Avesnois
AFRA	Association des français rapatriés d'origine algérienne
AJIR	Association, Justice, Information, Réparation
ANFANOMA	Association nationale pour des français d'Afrique du Nord, d'outre-mer, et de leurs amis
AOCAZ	Amicale des Oraniennes du Côte d'Azur
BDIC	Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
CAOM	Centre des archives d'outre-mer
CDHA	Centre de Documentation Historique sur l'Algérie
CEPN	Centre d'études pied-noir
CFMRAA	Comité des français musulmans rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord et leurs amis
CNFM	Convention nationale des français musulmans
CNLH	Comité national de liaison des harkis
CNSR	Conseil national supérieur des rapatriés
FIS	Front islamique du salut
FLN	Front de libération nationale
FN	Front national
FNACA	Fédération nationale des anciens combattants en Algérie
FNR	Front national des rapatriés
FPA	Force de police auxiliaire
GNPI	Groupement national pour l'indemnisation des biens spoliés ou perdus outre-mer
INA	Institut national de l'audiovisuel
JPN	Jeune pied-noir

LDH	Ligue des droits de l'Homme
MADRAN	Mouvement d'assistance et de défense des rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord
MJA	Mouvement jeunesse Algérieniste
MNA	Mouvement national Algérien
MRAP	Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples
OAS	Organisation armée secrète
PPN	Parti pied-noir
PS	Parti socialiste
RANFRAN	Rassemblement national des français d'Afrique du Nord et d'outre-mer
RECOURS	Rassemblement et coordination unitaires des rapatriés et spoilés
UDARFM	Union départemental des anciens rapatriés français-musulmans
USDIFRA	Union syndicale de défense des intérêts français repliés d'Algérie

Journals and Periodicals

<i>EO</i>	<i>L'écho d'oran, later L'écho de l'Oranie</i>
<i>EA</i>	<i>Aux échos d'Alger</i>
<i>FH</i>	<i>France Horizon: le cri du rapatrié,</i>
<i>H&M</i>	<i>Hommes et Migrations</i>
<i>LV</i>	<i>La lettre de Véritas</i>
<i>PNM</i>	<i>Pieds-Noirs Magazine, later Pieds-Noirs d'Hier et d'Aujourd'hui,</i>
<i>MCF</i>	<i>Modern and Contemporary France</i>
<i>SH</i>	<i>Sétif de l'hexagone</i>

Contents

<i>Declaration</i>	ii
<i>Abstract</i>	iii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>Abbreviations</i>	v
Introduction	1
<u>The <i>Pied-Noir</i> Community:</u>	
1. From Practical Beginnings to the Cultural Turn, 1962-1991	27
2. Developing the <i>Pied-Noir</i> Lexicon	34
French Algeria	34
The War of Independence	49
The Social and Physical Dimensions of Memory	57
3. Evolutions in Activism: <i>Guerres de mémoire</i> , 1991-2007	66
External Manifestations	66
Internal Dimensions	86
4. Transmission: The Next Generation	98
<u>The <i>Harki</i> Community:</u>	
5. Breaking the Silence, 1962-1991	103
6. The Evolution of Activism, 1991-2007	123
Associations and the Media	123
The Prominence of Individuals	130
Commemoration and the State	146
7. <i>Pieds-Noirs</i> and <i>Harkis</i> : The Evolution of a Relationship	153
8. Transmission: First Generation Memories	164
Conclusion	177
Appendices	184
Images	184
Questionnaire Responses	195
Bibliography	227

Introduction

The Algerian War of Independence lasted from 1954 until 1962. It pitted the independence-seeking guerrilla force, the Front de libération nationale (FLN), against a French government and army determined in the wake of the Second World War and Dien Bien Phu to avoid another humiliating military defeat at all costs and under pressure from a settler population of just over one million to maintain the French flag in Algeria. In addition, Algeria was not merely a piece of the empire, but an integral part of France comprising its southern most *départements*. Consequently, while the protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco gained independence relatively peacefully, Algeria was a different matter altogether. Noted for the brutality of tactics used by both sides, including the systematic use of torture by the French army, the conflict is estimated to have cost the lives of at least 150,000 Algerians, possibly up to 350,000, and tens of thousands of French soldiers, including approximately 60,000 native auxiliaries. Violence was furthermore not confined to the periphery with the activities of the FLN in France, including their bitter struggle for power with Messsali Hadj's Mouvement national algérien (MNA), the terror tactics of the clandestine paramilitary Organisation armée secrète (OAS)¹, and the ferocity of police repression on 17 October 1961, all bringing bloodshed to the streets of the metropole.² The war was also highly destabilising in political terms, bringing down the Fourth Republic, prompting the controversial return to power of General Charles de Gaulle and leading to the creation of the Fifth Republic. Although ostensibly ending hostilities, the signature of ceasefire accords at Evian in March 1962 actually led to an escalation of certain forms of violence, while the declaration of Algerian independence on 3 July 1962 came amidst the exodus of almost the entire settler population. Widely deemed to have been a conflict won militarily but lost politically, the end of French Algeria was a major blow to national prestige that de Gaulle sought to assuage through recourse to the idea of an inevitable tide of history and by turning the nation's attention to modernisation, consumerism, and Europe.³

Confirming the adage 'rien de tel que la mauvaise conscience pour favoriser l'oubli', de Gaulle's decision to turn the page on this ingloriously conducted and concluded conflict

¹ The OAS, a clandestine paramilitary group formed in 1961, used extreme violence in a bid to derail the independence process. Their most high profile acts included the failed assassination attempt on General de Gaulle at Petit Clamart and the blinding of five year old Delphine Renard who was caught in the blast from a bomb intended for the Gaullist Minister of Culture André Malraux. Although defunct by 1963, with many of its leaders either in prison or having been executed for treason, the OAS has continued to live in the hearts of many *Algérie française* partisans.

² On 17 October 1961, the metropolitan-based branch of the FLN mobilised thousands of Algerians for a peaceful march through the streets of the capital in protest over a curfew recently imposed by Prefect of Police, Maurice Papon. The savage repression of the demonstration by police and *harkis* of the Force de police auxiliaire (FPA), left up to 200 dead and many more wounded.

³ For an extended discussion of this idea see Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*, (Ithaca; London, 2006).

manifested itself in a potent state silence. This was compounded by a series of amnesties granted to participants on both sides and a lack of official commemoration either of the war, or those who fought in it.⁴ Even the term ‘war’ was to be avoided in favour of euphemisms such as ‘les événements’, while historians wishing to investigate these years were hampered by the highly restricted access to state archives.⁵ Consequently, the events of 1954-1962 were not formulated into a consensual narrative nor inserted into the nation’s official memory; instead they were effectively forgotten in what appeared to be a troubling case of national amnesia.⁶

However, not everyone succumbed to this malady. Two pockets of resistance in particular stand out: the former settlers, or *pieds-noirs*, and the *harkis*, those Algerians who, for a variety of reasons, ended up fighting under the French flag. Both populations spent the war in Algeria but in 1962 migrated *en masse* to France where they attempted to rebuild their lives. Focusing on a particular aspect of this endeavour, this thesis seeks to examine the ways in which these two exiled communities organised themselves in order to compose, mobilise, and articulate their collective memories of the recent past. The purpose of such an investigation is to challenge the conventional historical periodisation of a ‘forgotten’ war that made a dramatic return to public attention during the 1990s by revealing a continual presence of memory and commemorative activity both within these communities, but also between them and other memory carriers connected to the war. The evolutions and interactions of these collective memories support recent scholarly findings that question the idea of a neat division between the colonial and postcolonial periods by demonstrating how the former frequently bleeds into the latter.⁷ It furthermore offers vital context that will hopefully deepen understanding and enhance future analysis of the ongoing process by which France continues to ‘face up’ to its imperial past and deal with the complex contemporary legacies of this era.

⁴ Gilles Manceron and Hassan Remaoun, *D’une rive à l’autre: la guerre d’Algérie de la mémoire à l’Histoire*, (Paris, 1993), p.23.

⁵ The reluctance to term the events in Algeria a ‘war’ stemmed from the fact that such a designation would also involve admitting either that Algeria was a separate entity to France thus giving credence to the FLN’s claims for independence, or that the two sides were part of the same whole which meant that what was occurring was a civil war, a phenomenon that sat uncomfortably with a population still trying to heal the domestic divisions engendered by the Second World War.

⁶ Jean-Pierre Rioux, ‘La flamme et les bûchers’ in *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Rioux, (Paris, 1994), p.501.

⁷ Among many recent works see, Alec G. Hargreaves (ed.), *Memory, Empire and Postcolonialism: Legacies of French Colonialism*, (Oxford, 2005); Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*, (Bloomington, 2006); Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Sadrine Lemaire, *Culture postcoloniale: Traces et mémoires coloniales en France*, (Paris, 2006); Tahar Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants*, (New York, 1999).

‘The war without a name’

According to the traditional chronology and historiography, state-sponsored occultation meant that there were few popular representations of the war in stark contrast, as is often noted, to treatments of the Vietnam War in America, particularly cinematically.⁸ This situation was reflected historiographically by the dominance of the theme of absence in works concerning the memory of the war. John Talbott’s phrase, ‘the war without a name’, became universal shorthand for the perception of a conflict that had been buried under a mound of shame and silence ‘like a dark treasure of guilty family secrets’.⁹ Yet this image of absence needs to be reconciled with the reality of multiple texts, almost 3000 by the end of 1997, dealing with the war across a range of genres, but especially personal testimony and historical fiction.¹⁰ This ‘war of a thousand and one books’ is explicable primarily by the lack of public discourse which left those involved in the conflict no alternative but to look to writing as a ‘private substitute for the physical *lieux de mémoire*...inevitably lost together with French sovereignty over Algeria’.¹¹

The juxtaposition of absence from above with proliferation from below persisted until the 1990s when changes in the social, political, and academic environment began to bring these two poles closer together. This was the decade that witnessed the return of the war to public consciousness in a range of guises. Following Robert Frank’s observation that ‘en matière de mémoire comme de stratégie, les Français sont souvent en retard d’une guerre’, this development was, in large part, prompted by the renewed attention being devoted to another ‘dark’ episode in French history, the Vichy years.¹² This was especially the case following the trial of Maurice Papon for crimes against humanity for his role in the deportation of Jews as *préfet* of the Bordeaux region during the Second World War. This case

⁸ For further information of this subject see, Benjamin Stora, *Imaginaires de guerre: les images dans les guerres d’Algérie et du Viet-nam*, (Paris, 2004); Philip Dine, *Images of the Algerian War: French Fiction and Film, 1954-1992*, (Oxford, 1994); Philip Dine, ‘(Still) A la recherche de l’Algérie perdue: French Fiction and Film 1992-2004’, *Historical Reflections*, 28.2 (2002), 255-275.

⁹ Talbott, John, *The War Without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954-1962*, (London, 1981); Mike Mason, ‘Batailles pour la mémoire’, *Journal of African History*, 35 (1994), 305. However, perhaps the best historical analysis of this phenomenon remains Benjamin Stora’s *La gangrène et l’oubli*, (Paris, 1991).

¹⁰ See Benjamin Stora, *Le dictionnaire des livres de la guerre d’Algérie, 1955-1995*, (Paris, 1996). This particular statistic represents Stora’s most recent estimate, which he gave in an interview in *La Tribune*, 21 October 1997.

¹¹ Stora, *La gangrène*, pp.238, 255; Benjamin Stora, ‘Guerre d’Algérie: les instruments de la mémoire’ in *La guerre d’Algérie dans la mémoire et l’imaginaire*, ed. by Anny Dayan Rosenman and Lucette Valensi, (Paris, 2004), p.220; Dine, *Images*, p.7. It also provides a compelling argument for the kinds of investigations undertaken by Stora and Dine into cinematic and literary images of the war, although the visibility and accessibility of these sources at a time when archival access was still problematic probably also played a role. See, Benjamin Stora, *Le livre, mémoire de l’Histoire: Réflexions sur le livre et la guerre d’Algérie*, (Paris, 2005).

¹² Robert Frank, ‘Les troubles de la mémoire française’, in *La guerre d’Algérie*, p.604.

also brought to light Papon's tenure as Paris Police Chief during the infamous 17 October 1961, thus fixing the idea of some kind of continuity between the two conflicts in the minds of many. Indeed, there have been several attempts to map Henri Rousso's 'Vichy Syndrome' paradigm onto the chronology of the memory of the War of Independence in order to claim the existence of a comparable 'Algerian Syndrome'.¹³ Rousso himself recently weighed into this debate, arguing that while there were certain similarities, including the central role played by the concepts of 'devoir de mémoire' and 'victimhood', as well as the shared difficulty of creating a consensual form of national commemoration, the two wars remained distinct as did their commemorative trajectories.¹⁴ Irrespective of periodisation however, the public processing of the Vichy years sensitised the general population to the issues of memory and silences with respect to traumatic pasts, both highly pertinent to the War of Independence.¹⁵

Between the broadcasting of the documentary series *Les années algériennes* by Benjamin Stora and Peter Batty's *La guerre d'Algérie* at the beginning of the 1990s, which increased public awareness of the complexities of the war while generating considerable debate in the process, and Parliament's acknowledgement in 1999 that 'les événements' had in fact been 'une guerre', the conflict was rarely out of the public spotlight.¹⁶ At the political level, 'conditions de retour' were created by the outbreak of the first Gulf War and the so-called 'Second Algerian War', along with the co-incidence in power of President Jacques Chirac, who served in the war, and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, who cut his political teeth as an active opponent of the conflict. The 1990s also witnessed the retirement and passing of many key figures associated with the war, leaving the way clear for the emergence of a new, unconnected generation with a very different perspective. Some have again linked this back to Vichy with Stora arguing:

Il a fallu attendre trente ans, le temps d'une génération, pour que le film *Le chagrin et la pitié* incite les Français à accepter une histoire moins mythique...De la même façon, à la veille du trentième anniversaire des accords d'Évian, il est temps aujourd'hui...d'assumer dans tous ses aspects l'histoire de cette guerre.¹⁷

¹³ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France Since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, (Cambridge, MA; London, 1991). For scholars seeking to connect the two 'syndromes' see, Anne Donadey, "'Une certaine idée de la France": The Algerian Syndrome and Struggles Over French Identity', in *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth Century France*, ed. by Steven Unger and Tom Conley (Minneapolis, 1996), pp.215-233; David Schalk, 'Of Memories and Monuments: Paris and Algeria, Frejus and Indochina', *Historical Reflections*, 28.2 (2002), 241-254.

¹⁴ Henry Rousso, 'Les raisins verts de la guerre d'Algérie', in *La guerre d'Algérie (1954-1962)*, ed. by Yves Michaud, (Paris, 2004), pp.141-143.

¹⁵ Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris, 2005), p.99.

¹⁶ *Les années algériennes* (four episodes), aired 23 September 1991 to 8 October 1991 (A2); *La guerre d'Algérie* (five episodes), aired 12 August 1990 to 13 September 1990 (France 3).

¹⁷ Stora, *La gangrène*, p.9.

Academically this changing of the guard was represented by the rise to prominence of Raphaëlle Branche and Sylvie Thénault, both of whom have taken advantage of improved archival access to produce in-depth and innovative meditations on specific and, in Branche's case, taboo aspects of the conflict.¹⁸ These substantial monographs with their detailed and sustained analysis have been widely acclaimed as heralding a new style of research, taking over from the previous breadth at the expense of depth model epitomised by the dominance of articles and edited collections.¹⁹

'Un kalédiscope de mémoires éclatées'

All of these developments meant that by 2004, Stora and Mohammed Harbi felt confident enough to proclaim 'la fin de l'amnésie' with respect to the war.²⁰ Going further, Rouso argued for a longer gestation period with roots going back into the 1980s, but also that the 'end of amnesia' had, over the course of the 1990s, evolved into a state of 'hypermnésie', characterised by 'une présence continue et presque obsédante dans l'espace public contemporain'.²¹ This broadly parallels the evolution of the Vichy Syndrome whereby the 'duty to remember' came to undermine the legitimacy of the 'right to forget' leading to a state of 'obsession'.²² However, while 1940, and also 1914, were 'des expériences quasi unanimes', the Algerian War replaced universality with 'une multitude de solitudes...chacun pour soi', a fact reflected in the multiple groups currently resident in France connected to the war, each of whom possesses their own particular interpretation of those years.²³ These range from veterans who resented the fall of another communist domino after the shame of Vietnam, to the *porteurs de valise* who had actively aided the independence struggle, to the *harkis* who fought for the French against their fellow countrymen, and the *pieds-noirs* who

¹⁸ Sylvie Thénault, *Une drôle de justice, les magistrats dans la guerre d'Algérie*, (Paris, 2001);

Raphaëlle Branche, *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962*, (Paris, 2001).

¹⁹ For edited collections, alongside Rioux's *La guerre d'Algérie et les français*, see Charles-Robert Ageron (ed.), *La guerre d'Algérie et les Algériens*, (Paris, 1997); Charles-Robert Ageron (ed.), *La guerre d'Algérie au miroir des décolonisations françaises*, (Paris, 2000); Jean-Charles Jauffret (ed.), *Militaires et guerrillas dans la guerre d'Algérie*, (Brussels, 2001).

²⁰ Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (eds.), *La Guerre d'Algérie 1954-2004: la fin de l'amnésie*, (Paris, 2004). While this may be true in an objective sense, the ideas of amnesia and absence have retained a strong hold on popular imagination. This is fed by a media and publishing industry that continues to present the conflict as a perpetual site of rediscovery and to claim that their latest contribution will be the one to 'break the silence' by revealing some 'hidden' aspects of the conflict for the 'first time'.

²¹ Rouso, 'Les raisins verts', p.139. Patricia Lorcin advances a similar proposition when she writes that the silence surrounding the war 'fissured' before being officially broken in the 1990s. Lorcin, Patricia M.E. (ed.), *Algeria and France 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, (New York, 2006), p.xxv.

²² Éric Conan and Henry Rouso, *Vichy an Ever-Present Past*, trans. Nathan Bracher (Hanover, NH; London, 1998), p.4.

²³ Philippe Labro, *Des feux mal éteints*, (Paris, 1980), p.354.

generally viewed the colonial period as a blessing for all concerned and independence as the tragic sacrifice of a priceless piece of France. As the profile of the war has risen generally, this 'kaléidoscope de mémoires éclatées' have increasingly come into open conflict, particularly over the issue of when and how to commemorate the war, with each group seeking to see their version of the past enshrined in official rituals and monuments.²⁴ So intense has this competition become that it has acquired the epithet 'les guerres de mémoire'.

The fragmentation of memories of the war is a well-documented and widely accepted fact, most succinctly summarised by Stora's concept of 'cloistered remembering' whereby each group carries specific memories that are 'tronquées, partielles et partials', a phenomenon that manifests as the tendency to 'aller voir "son" film, reviver "ses" propres engagements ou esperances'.²⁵ Martin Evans, building on Alistair Thompson's notion of 'composure', further explains this impulse writing:

We compose memories so that they will fit in with what is seen as publicly acceptable; or if they have been excluded from general public acceptance, we seek our own particular public which affirms our identity and the way we want to remember our lives.²⁶

Underpinning the conclusions of several historical works, this situation is regularly denounced, particularly in light of its implications for national history and memory. Richard Derderian, for example, has criticised the 'continued valence of non-interactive group memories', which he believes 'complicates the prospects for achieving a larger consensus of memory'.²⁷ More generally, John Gillis has made explicit the societal consequences of remaining trapped within cloistered remembrances:

[D]emocratic societies need to publicise rather than privatise the memories and identities of all groups, so that each may know and respect the other's version of the past, thereby understanding better what divides as well as unites us. In this era of plural identities, we need civil times and civil spaces more than ever, for these are essential to the democratic processes by which individuals come together to discuss, debate and negotiate the past and, through this process, define the future.²⁸

²⁴ Charles-Robert Ageron, 'Conclusion' in *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.623.

²⁵ Stora, *Imaginaires*, p.190; Stora, *Le livre*, p.196; Stora, *La gangrène*, p.248.

²⁶ Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, (Oxford, 1997), p.12.

²⁷ Richard L. Derderian, 'Algeria as a lieu de mémoire: Ethnic Minority Memory and National Identity in Contemporary France', *Radical History Review*, 83 (2002), 29.

²⁸ John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, (Princeton, 1994), p.20.

Such invocations feed into a wider debate about the need to move from memory into history with respect to the Algerian War, a reference to the fact that although the conflict has now been ‘named’, it has been neither interrogated nor integrated, remaining, in the words of Tahar Ben Jelloun, ‘stated but not assimilated’.²⁹ This failure is attributed not to ignorance since, as Stora is keen to stress, historians have now ‘fait leur travail’, but to a flawed process of transmission and socialisation whereby the state has proven incapable of using this greater knowledge to create unifying narratives and consensual commemorative gestures to transcend divisions.³⁰ Arguably, this is symptomatic of the more fundamental problems France has had ‘coming to terms’ with decolonisation, particularly surmounting the challenge of reconciling the defence of the ‘one and indivisible’ Republic with the shift from a unitary colonial discourse, and thus a ‘cohesive national identity’, to a ‘plethora of competing postcolonial memories’.³¹

However, with a wealth of literature and column inches already devoted to these issues, this thesis is concerned less with identifying examples of the phenomenon of cloistered remembering and more with investigating the groups and the processes involved. Until recently, little attention was paid to collective entities such as the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* in France and even today the focus remains concentrated upon the context of the ‘return’ of the war in the 1990s and the resultant memory wars phenomenon. A clear line is thus drawn between absence prior to the 1990s and presence after this point, creating a false dichotomy. It is also the case that the widespread acceptance of cloistered remembering with respect to the War of Independence has not prompted any investigation into the actual content of these memories, the groups carrying them, nor, most importantly, what these groups were doing before the war became a ‘publicly acceptable’ topic in the 1990s; namely how they communicated and interacted with their own ‘particular public’ in order to ‘remember their lives’ prior to this.

From the ‘age of memory’ to the ‘age of history’

One explanation for this neglect of sub-state memory carriers can be found in the dominance of Pierre Nora’s *Les lieux de mémoire* as the paradigm through which to study collective

²⁹ Stora, *Le livre*, p.178; Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality*, p.10.

³⁰ Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère, *La guerre des mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial*, (Paris, 2007), p.28.

³¹ Éric Savarese, *Algérie, la guerre des mémoires*, (Paris, 2007), p.14. For a more extensive treatment of this issue see, Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Sadrine Lemaire (eds.), *La fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l’héritage coloniale*, (Paris, 2005); Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Françoise Vèges, *La République coloniale: essai sur une utopie*, (Paris, 2003).

memory in France, particularly its equation of 'collective' with 'national'.³² In common with most academic treatments of this subject, Nora's understanding of collective memory begins with the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs whose principal works on the subject, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* and *La mémoire collective*, have become almost canonical since their re-discovery in the 1970s.³³ Halbwachs, a Durkheimian, constructed his theory in answer to the individualistic conceptions of memory advanced by Freud and by Halbwachs' former mentor, Henri Bergson. To Bergson's argument that 'la mémoire est une expérience vécue des images du passé enfouies dans l'individu', Halbwachs responded that to remember was not to 'revivre', but to 'reconstruire' a past via 'des cadres sociaux du présent'.³⁴ For Halbwachs therefore, all memory is collective and able to endure only through *cadres sociaux*, the conceptual schemes and frameworks provided by social groups and the spaces they occupy.³⁵ Significantly, memory is not a given, 'complete and entire in the subterranean galleries of the mind', but rather a present-orientated social reconstruction of the past.³⁶ This makes Halbwachs, according to Lutz Niethammer, 'a demand-side theoretician of intellect' whereby 'needs create the representations of the tradition and their accentuations in turn point to the needs and interests of the group in question'.³⁷ Additionally, the socially framed nature of memory endows it with a shelf life; the memory can endure only as long as the group. Finally, the prominence, or social standing of the group in question has important implications for the durability, visibility and power of the memory.³⁸

All these elements of Halbwachs' thought can be found in Nora's theory of collective memory, which he explains via the key concept of a *lieu de mémoire*, defined as:

³² Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, (7 vols; Paris, 1984-1992). Available in English as *Realms of Memory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, (3 vols; New York, 1994-1998).

³³ Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, (Paris, 1925); *La mémoire collective*, (Paris, 1968). Halbwachs' work has not, however, been accepted uncritically with scholars from Marc Bloch to Hayden White voicing concerns. For a range of these critiques see, Peter Burke, 'History as Social Memory', in *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, ed. by Thomas Butler, (Oxford, 1989), p.98; Hayden White, 'Catastrophe, Communal Memory and Mythic Discourse: The Uses of Myth in the Reconstruction of Society', in *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community: Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond*, ed. by Bo Stråth, (Brussels, 2000), p.53; Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, (Maidenhead, 2003), pp.50-56; Lutz Niethammer, 'Maurice Halbwachs: Memory and the Feeling of Identity', in *Myth and Memory*, pp.82-84.

³⁴ Gérard Namer, 'Postface' in *Les cadres sociaux*, pp.317, 329.

³⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter and Vita Yazdi Ditter, (New York, 1980), pp.23, 33. This is even true of events with a sole witness or participant because in order to recall that occasion it is necessary to relate it to other people, impressions, or comments.

³⁶ Lewis A. Coser, 'Introduction', in Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser, (Chicago, 1992), p.22.

³⁷ Niethammer, 'Maurice Halbwachs', p.82.

³⁸ The issue of power is a particularly intriguing point in relation to memories of the War of Independence given that many of the groups holding such memories, like the *harkis*, were socially disempowered, while the most powerful group, the state, appeared to possess no memory of the conflict.

Any significant entity, whether material or non material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time had become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community.³⁹

These *lieux* are not stable sites of memory but ‘hybrid places’ that thrive because of their capacity for change. Examples include the Pantheon, the Tour de France, *La Petite Laisse*, and coffee; symbols that epitomise ‘Frenchness’ but whose precise significance and meaning have altered over time. Nora’s self-proclaimed goal is ‘to reinterpret the history of France in symbolic terms’, to offer a ‘history of the second degree’ by which he envisions a history ‘less interested in “what actually happened” than in its perpetual reuse and misuse, its influence on successive presents’.⁴⁰

The impetus for Nora’s magnum opus was his sense that ‘memory is constantly on our lips because it no longer exists’.⁴¹ We have moved out of the ‘age of memory’ he argues, where memory was collective, spontaneous, unselfconscious lived experience, into the ‘age of history’ where memory is a duty incumbent upon the individual, something apart from us to be analysed, archived, and artificially preserved in libraries, museums, and monuments.⁴² Paralleling Richard Terdiman’s idea of a ‘memory crisis’ in the nineteenth-century, Nora argues that the magnitude of events like the French Revolution and World War One severed the organic connection to the past, their enormity making it difficult for those who lived through them to remember what life was like ‘before’.⁴³ This disconnection between past and present brought about the realisation that there was nothing natural and inherent about memories. The result was a shift from memory contained within to memory projected without, invested in tangible spaces and declaring its presence through external signs. From this dislocation stemmed alienation and ultimately historicism, hence Nora’s lament that ‘We no longer celebrate the nation, but we study the nation’s celebrations’.⁴⁴ What Nora appears to mourn most is the fact that ‘history is now a social science, memory a purely private phenomenon’.⁴⁵ He has been especially vocal in warning of the dangers inherent in this arguing, in a critique reminiscent of denunciations of cloistered remembering, that private memory has become ‘a dynamic of self-enclosure, a lack of understanding of the other, alienation from one’s own history, a means of legitimising oneself, the loss of common

³⁹ Pierre Nora, ‘Preface’ in *Realms of Memory*, vol. 1, p.xvii.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.xxiv.

⁴¹ Pierre Nora, ‘Between History and Memory’ in Ibid. p.1.

⁴² Ibid. pp.10-14.

⁴³ Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*, (Ithaca; London, 1993), pp.31-32.

⁴⁴ Nora, ‘Between Memory and History’, p.8. This echoes Halbwachs’ point that ‘General history starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up’. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, pp.78-79.

⁴⁵ Nora, ‘Between Memory and History’, p.11.

ground and very often a powerfully aggressive ethnic nationalism'.⁴⁶ According to Richard Derderian, Nora therefore conceived of *Les Lieux* as a 'rescue project', designed to 'shore up France's shared but now endangered sites of memory by revealing their inner workings'.⁴⁷

Nora's claim to deconstruction is therefore slightly disingenuous. He is happy to analyse the fluctuations in meanings of symbols, as long as the bedrock of Frenchness on which the symbol in question rests is never threatened. Consequently, as critics have been quick to point out, 'nation' is treated in *Les Lieux* as a material-cultural reality, rather than the political representation, or 'imagined community', that it actually is. As Hue-Tam Ho Tai notes:

For all Nora's embrace of polyphony and polysemy, the French nation of *Realms of Memory* is a given rather than a problem or a project... This is a France that is indivisible even when understood differently over time and by different segments of the population.⁴⁸

Furthermore, what Nora assumes to be a 'unified national consciousness' may in fact be a dominant memory, a conception of France formulated by the winners. Alternative visions of the nation, for example that held by descendents of North African immigrants, are relegated to 'dominated sites'. Tai then uses Nora's own definition of these sites as 'places of refuge, sanctuaries of instinctive devotion and hushed pilgrimages' in order to imply that the memories Nora sidelines in fact exhibit precisely the characteristics of 'true' memory whose contemporary absence he mourns. Tai concludes by suggesting that by exposing 'history-as-commemoration', which he regards as 'another name for official history', Nora and his disciples have created a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby all memory, even more organic and 'true' counter-memories, will eventually be historicised and thus destroyed. 'If there seems to be a surfeit of commemoration' Tai remarks, 'it is because hitherto-silenced minorities have become vocal even as the politics of both history and memory have been exposed'.⁴⁹ In a similar vein, Nancy Wood takes issue with Nora's exclusive identity politics, arguing that his nation, defined through its symbolic representations, 'excludes from its embrace those

⁴⁶ Pierre Nora cited in Richard L. Derderian, *North Africans in Contemporary France: Becoming Visible*, (Basingstoke, 2004), p.168.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 179. See also Steven Englund, 'The Ghost of Nation Past', *Journal of Modern History*, 64 (1992), 301-302.

⁴⁸ Hue-Tam Ho Tai, 'Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory', *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 910.

⁴⁹ Tai, 'Remembered Realms', 920-921.

“strangers” who do not have the same emotional investment in “les lieux de mémoire” of “la patrie”⁵⁰.

Wood’s intention is to highlight the increasing redundancy of over-arching state-centric explanatory frameworks with respect to collective memory, yet most significant recent French contributions to memory studies have adopted similar approaches. For example, although Rousso defines collective memory as ‘an ensemble of representations and attitudes towards the past, proper to a collectivity and variable in time’, it never occurs to him that there are other ‘collectives’ outside of, and more specifically beneath, that of the nation.⁵¹ His work on the ‘Vichy Syndrome’ has therefore been criticised for focusing on ‘a largely public, often official and narrowly political memory’.⁵² Stora has similarly been taken to task for privileging official memory, particularly in his focus on recognition and reconciliatory gestures emanating from the state as the solution to the current memory wars problem.⁵³ Concentrating on institutions at the highest level also explains the centrality of the role played by ‘absence’ in his work and that of other historians.⁵⁴ Collectively, Claire Gantet finds Nora, Stora, and Rousso guilty of purveying history that emphasises dates and physical traces ‘au detriment de la circulation des mémoires dans une société et de la communication à l’intérieur d’un groupe’, with the result that ‘la mémoire tend à être réduite aux usage politiques du passé, et identité à un processus social imposé “par en haut”’.⁵⁵

Restoring social agency

The obvious question to ask is therefore whether another, less ‘top down’, definition of collective memory would reveal a different picture of the evolution of memories of the war? The Popular Memory Group, which evolved out of Birmingham University’s history department in the early 1980s, offered one such option when they argued that memory is not a single account of the past imposed by one group upon another, but a relational nexus of contested and competing representations in which hegemonic interpretations are the temporarily prevailing results of a constant process of negotiation.⁵⁶ Significantly, this

⁵⁰ Nancy Wood, ‘Memorial Militancy in France: “Working Through” or the Politics of Anachronism?’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 29.2 (1995), 93.

⁵¹ Henry Rousso, ‘Pour une histoire de la mémoire collective: L’après Vichy’, in *Histoire politique et sciences sociales*, ed. by Denis Peschanski, Michael Pollak, and Henry Rousso (Paris, 1991), p.251

⁵² Alon Confino, ‘Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method’, *American Historical Review*, (December 1997), 1394.

⁵³ William, B. Cohen, ‘The Algerian War and French Memory’, *Contemporary European History*, 9.3 (2000), 492.

⁵⁴ William, B. Cohen, ‘The Algerian War, the French State and Official Memory’, *Historical Reflections*, 28.2 (2002), 228.

⁵⁵ Claire Gantet, ‘La mémoire, objet et sujet d’histoire. Enquête sur l’historicité et sur l’écriture de l’histoire’, *Francia*, 28.2 (2001), 114.

⁵⁶ Popular Memory Group, ‘Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method’, in *Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics*, ed. by Richard Johnson, (London, 1982), pp.211-236. This

definition of memory also provides an appealing alternative to the history versus memory paradigm of which Pierre Nora is merely the most high profile exponent. For Nora there is a distinction to be made whereby 'Memory is life, always embodied in living society', while history is 'the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer'.⁵⁷ However, various commentators have pointed out that Nora himself struggles to maintain such a rigid separation and that 'a certain fuzziness' creeps into his deployment of history and memory in places.⁵⁸ For other historical practitioners this problem is avoided through the acceptance that memory 'is dialectically related to historical thought, rather than being some kind of other to it'.⁵⁹

Memory is therefore not a separate entity, floating somewhere in the cultural atmosphere, but is instead an organic compound which takes shape within the societies it concerns.⁶⁰ As John Gillis reminds us, 'identities and memories are not things we think about but things we think with. As such, they have no existence beyond our politics, our social relationship and our histories'.⁶¹ This renders an either/or choice between history and memory unnecessary and can also help to guard against another frequent criticism of memory studies: its atomization. The fragmentation of the field and its tendency to define itself topically – monuments, films, museums, repressed memory – means that it 'runs the risk of becoming an assemblage of distinct topics that describe in a predictable way how people construct the past', rather than providing answers to the more productive questions such as: Who is constructing these pasts and why? Which ones are accepted, rejected, or contested and why?⁶² When Nora bemoans the commemoration phenomenon, which he cites as at the root of the contemporary privatization and atomization of memory, he appears to place the blame on the groups themselves, claiming that each commemoration has become 'a search for the one thread in the social fabric of the present which will permit direct contact with the irrevocably dead past'.⁶³ However, fragmentation is equally a product of historiography given the propensity of historians to study particular manifestations of collective memory in isolation

understanding of collective memory has resonated with many historians, including Martin Evans who describes the field of public representation with respect to the War of Independence as being 'crossed by competing constructions of the past often at war with each other'. Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, p.10.

⁵⁷ Nora, 'Between History and Memory', p.3.

⁵⁸ Tai, 'Remembered Realms', 915.

⁵⁹ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, vol.1, (London, 1994), p.x.

⁶⁰ Jay Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance in the Aftermath of the Great War', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, (Cambridge, 1999), p.40.

⁶¹ Gillis, *Commemoration*, p.5.

⁶² Confino, 'Collective Memory', 1387.

⁶³ Pierre Nora, 'The Era of Commemoration' in *Realms of Memory*, vol. 3, p.626.

from each other and from broader social contexts, rather than thinking about them as ‘a many-layered and changing collection of discourses about the past’.⁶⁴

Two historians in particular have challenged the hegemony of Nora’s paradigm not only by pointing out its weaknesses, but also by proposing an alternative conception that embodies many of the attributes discussed above. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan most obviously distance themselves from Nora’s theory of collective memory by rejecting the term altogether on the basis that ‘the ‘collective memory’ of war is not what everybody thinks about war. It is a phrase without meaning when we try to disentangle the behaviour of different groups within society’.⁶⁵ Winter and Sivan instead advocate the phrase ‘collective remembrance’ to acknowledge that memory is a plural and socially framed phenomenon that involves ‘gathering together bits and pieces of the past, and joining them together in public’. For Winter and Sivan the ‘public’ is ‘the group that produces, expresses and consumes [the past]’ while what they create is ‘not a cluster of individual memories; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts’.⁶⁶ This harks back to Halbwachs’ contention that there are as many memories as groups. But whereas Nora acknowledges this before going on to unite these disparate groups into a single collective on the basis of their shared national affiliation, Winter and Sivan seem happy for there to be multiple entities that are not mutually exclusive as Nora assumes sub-state private memories to be.

Central to all of this is the concept of agency. Rather than viewing communities as the passive recipients of discourses dictated from above, it is important to remember that these groups are active participants in a multi-directional process. For Winter in particular, the work of collective memory is done primarily by agents of remembrance operating in civil society. Borrowing from anthropology, he terms these groups of agents ‘fictive kin’, a phrase he uses as ‘shorthand for a multiplicity of groups’, with ‘fictive’ meant to imply constructed and created, rather than imaginary or untrue.⁶⁷ These are small-scale agents whose work is ‘liminal’ allowing them to occupy ‘the space between individual memory and the national theatre of collective memory choreographed by social and political leaders’.⁶⁸ Thus although primarily concerned with locally-rooted social action, Winter remains aware that fictive kin memories are not formed in isolation, and that there is continual dialogue between individuals, groups, and the state.

⁶⁴ Josie McLellan, *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering the International Brigades*, (Oxford, 2004), p.5.

⁶⁵ Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan ‘Setting the Framework’, in *War and Remembrance*, p.9.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.6.

⁶⁷ Winter, ‘Forms of Kinship’, p.41.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.41.

‘La mémoire française est pleine d’Algérie’

Winter’s fictive kin concept is particularly interesting because of the way he applies it to the ‘dense networks of filiation’ that emerged following the Great War, often in the form of associations. Dedicated to providing assistance, support, and forums in which to campaign for recognition, recompense, and respect, Winter views these as the ‘hidden prehistory of many, more visible, forms of collective remembrance’.⁶⁹ In the context of the War of Independence, it could equally be argued that the absence of public commemoration and the attention this has attracted worked to conceal a rich ‘undergrowth of non-official activity’ that preceded the statues and plaques now being unveiled across France.⁷⁰ Between 1954 and 1962, 2.3 million Frenchmen served in Algeria, approximately 4.6% of the population, while there are an estimated 6 million people in France today with a direct personal link to the war, including over one million *pieds-noirs*, an equal number of Algerian immigrants, and thousands of *harkis*, plus their descendants.⁷¹ It seems implausible to suggest that none of these groups has made any effort to remember the war, especially given their regional concentration coupled with their difficulties integrating into an often suspicious and hostile French society. In fact, Stora raises the possibility of a neglected wealth of memory and memory activity behind official occultation as early as *La gangrène*, only to leave it tantalisingly unexplored:

Mais la mémoire réelle de cette guerre ...elle n’a jamais cessé de fonctionner...Aucun peuple, aucune société, aucun individu ne saurait exister et définir son identité en état d’amnésie; une mémoire parallèle, individuelle trouve toujours des refuges lorsque les pouvoirs veulent la rendre captive, ou l’oubli.⁷²

Stora is not the only scholar to note that ‘la mémoire française est pleine d’Algérie’, although virtually none have gone on to investigate this presence further.⁷³ The dominance of Nora, Rousso, and Stora seems to have produced a rather narrow way of ‘doing’ memory studies with respect to French history, especially twentieth century periods. Confusing ‘occultation’ with ‘oubli’ has perhaps blinded historians to the possibility of alternative narratives and

⁶⁹ Ibid. p.47.

⁷⁰ Nor does the advent of official commemoration necessarily mean that all other forms of non-official remembrance will cease. Indeed, the controversies that have surrounded recent initiatives suggest that many are far from satisfied by the government’s efforts to date.

⁷¹ Stora, *La gangrène*, p.294; Neil MacMaster, ‘The Torture Controversy (1998-2002): Towards a “New History” of the Algerian War’, *MCF*, 10.4 (2002), 451; Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire: de l’ “Algérie Française” au racisme anti-arabe*, (Paris, 1999), p.71

⁷² Stora, *La gangrène*, p.319.

⁷³ Frank, ‘Les troubles’, p.604.

counter-memories, or at least led them to neglect their importance in favour of collective memories created and transmitted from 'above'.⁷⁴ Indeed, Winter and Sivan's collaborative project was partly inspired by a desire to correct Nora's 'premature and misleading obituary' of popular memory by providing evidence of its vibrancy and ongoing relevance.⁷⁵ A similar corrective seems particularly necessary with respect to the War of Independence given that many of the groups affected have experienced extreme dislocation, have been denied social legitimacy and, consequently, do not form part of the national symbolic heritage so meticulously catalogued by Nora. This suggests that the traditional structures of memory transmission, particularly family and fictive kin, may have assumed greater prominence as support networks, remaining more intact than is true for society in general. Furthermore, the lack of *lieux de mémoire*, not simply monuments but also battlefields, cemeteries, even homes for many, leave *milieux de mémoire* as all that these groups have. It therefore seems logical to suggest that these actors are the most likely to be living *with* their memories, even beyond the generations directly involved, because there have been no external sites, rituals, or narratives enjoying broad recognition and legitimacy onto which to project and fix their memories. It is these communities to which attention should be turned as part of an effort to broaden both the definition of collective memory in French history and our understanding of the evolution of memories of the War of Independence.

In looking for evidence of such strata of sub-state collective memories, the obvious place to start is with associations, a particularly French penchant that combines all of Winter's key elements being simultaneously collective, public, plural and agency-driven.⁷⁶ Defined as 'le lien social qui explique une identité transportée au delà des murs et des processus d'activation sociale de groupe', associations reflect the fact that it is impossible to maintain a community without 'un réseau dynamique de sociabilité' that undertakes the task of 'auto-définition' and 'auto-promotion'.⁷⁷ As Halbwachs argued, individual recollections have to be 'fixed' and continually reiterated in order for them to become collective. This act of collation and enunciation requires active agents, what Gérard Noiriel calls 'memory entrepreneurs' and Nathan Watchel terms 'memory bearers', who are crucial because they

⁷⁴ Robert Frank stresses that to forget is to 'vider la mémoire de ses souvenirs', whereas with the War of independence it was more a case of memories that were 'longtemps enfouis, cachés, contenus'. This is why they were able to 'resurgir violemment à la surface lorsque l'actualité déchire un coin du voile', as happened during the 1990s. Ibid. p.604.

⁷⁵ Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', p.3.

⁷⁶ For further information on the history of associations in France see Martine Barthelemy, *Associations un nouvel âge de la participation*, (Paris, 2000); Bernard Roudet, *Histoires des associations: relations à l'insitution municipale et repérage des conflits*, (Grenoble, 1987); Bernard Roudet, *Des jeunes et des associations* (Paris, 1996)

⁷⁷ Suzy Guth, 'Un lien social identitaire: les associations de pieds-noirs', in *Les Rapatriés d'Algérie en Languedoc-Roussillon 1962-1992*, ed. by Mohand Khellil et Jules Maurin, (Montpellier, 1992), p.161; Jean-Jacques Jordi, '1962 l'arrivée des Pieds-Noirs', *Autrement: Français d'ailleurs, peuple d'ici*, 81 (1995), 123; Éric Savarese, *L'invention des Pieds-noirs*, (Paris, 2002), p.120.

‘choose from an infinite variety of individual memories those which are best suited to support their cause and transform them into collective memory’.⁷⁸ Therefore it is not the group *per se* that explains the collective memory, but rather the group’s structure, particularly the way in which individual recollections are connected in order to create a ‘collective consciousness’; as Stora underlines, ‘la mémoire est aussi une affaire des structures’.⁷⁹

As repositories of, and vehicles for, the expression of collective memories, associations have played a particularly significant role with respect to the War of Independence. ‘Elles ont été à l’origine d’une abondante production sur l’histoire de cette guerre’ writes Sylvie Thénault, before going on to list the many avenues through which they have accomplished this including publishing testimonies, organising reunions, erecting monuments, launching law suits, diffusing their own press and propaganda, even producing their own television documentaries; all of which testifies to ‘une dynamisation de la mémoire, indépendant de l’État’.⁸⁰ Abderahmen Moumen’s comment that any study of the identity and memory of *rapatriés* from Algeria ‘implique une incursion dans les activités associatives’ is therefore equally applicable to other memory carriers connected to the conflict.⁸¹ In terms of methodology, this logically necessitates an incursion into all areas and mediums in which associations are active. The research for this thesis consequently incorporates evidence drawn from a range of sources, including received testimony, autobiographies, questionnaire responses, association publications, audiovisual and online material, as well as the national and regional press. Believing the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts, an integrated approach to the processing and presentation of evidence was adopted, although this was combined with an awareness of the respective strengths and weaknesses of each type of source. The underlying principle was to analyse discourses constructed by these communities rather than simply relying on representations offered by others on the basis that ‘Le discours n’est pas simplement ce qui traduit les luttes ou les systèmes de domination, mais ce pour quoi on lutte, ce par quoi on lutte’.⁸² Furthermore, associations have constituted the fundamental tools with which the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* have sought to build their collective memories, making them an especially important organism through which to access and

⁷⁸ Gérard Noiriel, ‘Immigration, Amnesia and Memory’, *French Historical Studies*, 19.2 (1995), 380; Nathan Wachtel, ‘Introduction’ in *Between Memory and History*, ed. by Marie-Noëlle Bourget, Lucette Valensi, and Nathan Wachtel (Chur, Switzerland, 1990), p.14.

⁷⁹ Wachtel, ‘Introduction’, p.9; Roger Bastide, ‘Mémoire collective et sociologie du bricolage’, *L’Année sociologique*, (1970), 85; Didier Folléas, ‘An Interview with Benjamin Stora: Guerre d’Algérie: la mémoire par les images’, *Historical Reflections*, 28.2 (2002), 208.

⁸⁰ Sylvie Thénault, ‘France-Algérie: Pour un traitement commun du passé de la guerre d’indépendance’, *Vingtième siècle*, 85 (January-March 2005), 121.

⁸¹ Abderahmen Moumen, *Entre histoire et mémoire: Les rapatriés d’Algérie dictionnaire bibliographique*, (Nice, 2003), p.25.

⁸² Michel Foucault, *L’ordre du discours*. (Paris, 1971), p.12. Also cited in Mohand Hamoumou, ‘Les harkis: une double occultation’, in *Intégration et exclusion dans la société Française contemporaine*, ed. by Gilles Ferréol, (Lille, 1993), p.79.

understand the narratives about the past they have carried and transmitted. However, before turning to an examination of the construction and evolution of their collective memories, it is first necessary to obtain a fuller picture of the two communities and their historical trajectories.

The *pied-noir* community

The term *pied-noir* essentially refers to the settler community of French Algeria who made up approximately 10 per cent of the population by 1954. Coming from a wide range of European countries and for an equally diverse array of reasons, these men and women arrived from the 1830s onwards as France's newest possession was pacified and settled. In 1889 and 1893, naturalisation laws unilaterally conferred French citizenship upon them, placing them firmly at the top of the colonial hierarchy. Although bestowed rather than requested, the nature of daily life in French Algeria meant that this new identity quickly took root, not least in the classroom where the Ferry Laws ensured that history began with 'nos ancêtres, les Gaulois...' The First and Second World Wars provided these 'new' French with an opportunity to prove their fidelity to the motherland, which they did by enlisting in disproportionately high numbers. The end result was, as Jean-Jacques Jordi has noted, that 'les liens qu'entretenaient les Français d'Algérie avec leur régions ou leur patrie d'origine s'estompent, et l'attachement du milieu natal devient plus fort que le souvenir des origines paternelles'.⁸³

Intimately entwined with France's colonial project in Algeria, the settlers equally considered themselves and their land to be integral parts of the French nation. *Algérie française* was thus not simply a phrase, but an indisputable reality for these people. It was also a reality they wished to see perpetuated, hence their opposition to the independence-seeking FLN. However, after eight years of bitter and bloody conflict Algeria ceased to be part of France in July 1962. The rapidly escalating violence that followed the signing of the Evian Accords in March 1962, led the settler community to believe that their lives would be untenable under FLN rule.⁸⁴ Consequently, over 90 per cent, or almost one million people, left Algeria over the course of that summer; the majority headed for France.⁸⁵

⁸³ Jean-Jacques Jordi, 'Les pieds noirs: constructions identitaires et réinvention des origines', *H&M*, 1236 (March-April 2002), 19.

⁸⁴ Although the *pieds-noirs* subsequently claimed that the FLN always intended to drive them out once independence was secured, the Evian Accords actually envisaged that the majority of settlers would remain because this was the most convenient outcome for both France and Algeria.

⁸⁵ This included over 100,000 Jews who, having been given French nationality by the Decret Crémieux of 1870, opted in 1962 to place their French citizenship above their historical, cultural, and emotional ties to Algeria. Although they constitute a fascinating and significant post-war collective memory case study, doing them justice would require a separate thesis. This is especially true given the complexity of the connections between the Jews of Algeria and various other groups in France, including the *pieds-noirs*. While some Algerian Jews have opted to subsume their religious and

Believing France had been victorious militarily and therefore regarding the Evian Accords as an act of incomprehensible capitulation that unnecessarily sacrificed French Algeria, the predominant sentiments among the settlers were bewilderment and anger. Betrayed and abandoned by France, they felt that their only choice in the summer of 1962 was ‘la valise ou le cercueil’.⁸⁶ The hasty and improvised nature of many departures, as well as the sheer volume of people leaving meant that most settlers were only able to take with them what they could carry. The trauma of this experience transformed exile into *the* defining characteristic of the displaced settlers. Indeed the death of French Algeria, for the country was not only lost to the settlers in 1962 but ceased to exist altogether, coincided with the birth of the *pieds-noirs* as a population.⁸⁷ The diversity of their lives as French Algerians up to that point was erased, replaced by a collective *rapatrié* identity that revolved around the foundational event of their exodus, permanently fixing their gaze over their shoulder on what had been lost.⁸⁸ When writing his memoirs, Gérard Crespo acknowledged that ‘en réalité, les peuples de la colonisation ont été différents selon les époques et les régions’, but went on to state that ‘[a]près 1962 beaucoup des choses changeront et les pieds-noirs se trouvent une unité dans l’adversité’.⁸⁹

During the colonial era, the dominant position of the settlers meant that they did not have to consciously grapple with their identity; they could simply take it for granted. Algerian independence destroyed this sense of security, jettisoning the *pieds-noirs* not only into an alien country, but also into an alien social position. The trauma of this rupture produced a fixation on ‘une terre idéalisée’, the lineaments of which became more vivid and more perfect in direct proportion to the turmoil and distress of the present.⁹⁰ The *pieds-noirs* therefore arrived in France in 1962 with few worldly possessions, but a long list of grievances. These

ethnic specificity within the larger *pied-noir* identity, others have deliberately cultivated a separate associational network, leaving a shifting centre ground composed of those who have either attempted to straddle this divide, or who move between the two poles depending on circumstances. This dissertation will therefore concern itself only with those *rapatriés* and associations who define themselves as *pied-noir*.

⁸⁶ This phrase has become emblematic of the situation as the settlers perceived it in 1962. It was also the title of one of the earliest post-war *pied-noir* memoirs. See Anne Loesch, *La valise et le cercueil*, (Paris, 1963)

⁸⁷ Although this identity had begun to take shape during the latter stages of the war as the settlers became conscious of themselves as a collective and of the magnitude of the threat to their position, the summer of 1962, and the exodus in particular, represents the point at which it crystallised. Jordi, ‘Les pieds noirs’, 22.

⁸⁸ With respect to the settler community prior to 1954, it should be noted that although the cliché of the rich and exploitative *colon* does bear some semblance to reality, reflecting the privilege of certain settler lives in French Algeria, the population as a whole was diverse. Overall the standard of living in Algeria was lower than that in mainland France, while incomes also varied between urban centres such as Algiers and the *bled*. Location further affected the nature of relationships between the settlers and the other inhabitants of the colony, with interactions generally considered to be closer, or certainly more frequent, in rural areas where the proximity between different communities was greater.

⁸⁹ Gérard Crespo, *Un enfant là-bas dans la guerre, ici dans l’indifférence*, (Hélette, 1997), p.12.

⁹⁰ Jordi, ‘1962’, 114.

were compounded by the lack of facilities initially available to assist with their installation, the French having anticipated an exodus of 400,000 over four years, not one million in the space of a couple of months, as well as the reluctance of successive governments to offer compensation for their losses. As one headline from the time proclaimed: ‘Désordre, improvisation, humiliations. Impossible pour les rapatriés de sentir “chez eux”’.⁹¹ The situation was exacerbated by the lack of familial or kinship networks to help ease their transition into their new world, as well as by the fact that the *pieds-noirs* also felt themselves and their history to have been misunderstood by their metropolitan cousins who tended to stereotype them all as *colons* who ‘fait sueur les burnous’. Finding no wider community open to including them, indeed many considered the French community to be actively closing ranks against them, the *pieds-noirs* naturally turned in on themselves. Herein lies the roots of the insularity of which the community are often accused; what Jordi has described as the ‘solidarité excessive et exclusive’ which manifests itself in ‘la recherche du médecin rapatrié, du boulanger rapatrié...avec quel on pourra parler de “là-bas” et évoquer un passé regretté, qui ne saurait revivre certes, mais qui n’appellerait pas en retour des condamnations ou opprobres’.⁹² These factors combined to produce a powerful sentiment of victimhood and a range of perceived injustices to be rectified.

One of the principal ways *pied-noirs* have sought redress for their grievances is through associations. As the saying goes ‘Quand deux pieds-noirs se rencontrent et commencer à évoquer leurs souvenirs, ils créent trois associations’.⁹³ Between 400 and 800 such associations are believed to exist to which 10 to 15 per cent of the *pied-noir* population belong.⁹⁴ The purpose of this thesis is to explore the role played by these associations in the creation, codification and transmission of a collective *pied-noir* memory after 1962. This examination is framed by the following key questions: What shape does this collective memory assume and how does it evolve over time? How is it mobilised and to what ends? To what extent is it affected by interactions with other memory carriers? What are these associations ultimately seeking and to what extent can they be deemed to have succeeded in their quest? In attempting to provide answers to such questions, this dissertation necessarily builds on the work of various scholars of the *pied-noir* community such as Jean-Jacques Jordi, Clarisse Bueno, Michèle Baussant, Joëlle Hureau, Valérie Esclangon-Morin and Eric

⁹¹ ‘Les années mélancholiques’, *Les pieds-noirs: Histoires d’une blessure*, aired 7 April 2007 (Fr3).

⁹² Jean-Jacques Jordi, ‘Archéologie et structure du réseau de sociabilité rapatrié et pied-noir’, *Provence Historique*, 47 (1997), 182

⁹³ *Ibid.* 177.

⁹⁴ Roche Roche, ‘Pieds-noirs: le “retour”’, *MCF*, 2.2 (1994), 153; Maurice Calmein, *Les associations pieds-noirs*, (Carcassonne, 1994), p.15; Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De l’exode à l’exil: rapatriés et pieds noirs en France: l’exemple marseillais, 1954-1992*, (Paris, 1993), p.179; Rosemary Averell Manes, *The Pieds-Noirs 1960-2000: A Case Study in the Persistence of Subcultural Distinctiveness*, (Bethesda, MD, 2005), p.52.

Savarese. However, the approach adopted here differs in several crucial respects from those taken previously. No attempt will be made to establish a typology of *pied-noir* associations since Buono has already provided this.⁹⁵ In addition, such an endeavour would distract from the main concern here, which is to trace and analyse the development of the collective memory of a community from a holistic standpoint. This in no way seeks to deny the heterogeneity of the *pieds-noirs*, nor of their associations. In fact this diversity serves as a necessary foundation upon which to build a profile of points of commonality and difference.⁹⁶ In light of this, establishing artificially clear-cut divisions between different types of *pieds-noirs* organisations seems unnecessarily restrictive and reductive, particularly given the fluidity that characterises associational allegiances within the community.

The research for this investigation was deliberately based upon as wide a range of associations and their publications as possible, from those with a particular regional focus like *L'écho d'Oran*, known as *L'écho de l'Oranie* from 1966, to those with a community-wide remit not ostensibly tied to any association, such as the monthly *Pieds-Noirs Magazine* (PNM).⁹⁷ Issue-specific organisations such as the Groupement national pour l'indemnisation des biens spoliés ou perdus outre-mer (GNPI) were included with broader entities such as the Cercle Algérieniste. Long-standing collectives such as the Association nationale pour des français d'Afrique du Nord, d'outre-mer, et de leurs amis (ANFANOMA), founded in 1956 and still going strong today, were considered alongside more recent arrivals on the *pied-noir* associational scene such as Véritas whose first newsletter appeared in 1996. Naturally within such a sample there is considerable diversity in terms of size, activeness, personalities, and political orientations, particularly when the time span of this study is taken into account. Given this variety, internal histories of these associations will not be provided, except in instances where this has a direct bearing on the nature of the memory being carried. It is also, once again, beside the point of this investigation, which is concerned less with the practical history of *pied-noir* associations and more with the evolution of the representations of the past that these groups are the vehicles for.

Finally, this analysis hopes to distinguish itself from prior work in its pluralistic understanding of the relationships that exist within and beyond the *pied-noir* community. The

⁹⁵ Clarisse Buono, *Pieds-noirs de père en fils*, (Paris, 2004).

⁹⁶ The use of the phrase '*pied-noir* community' should therefore be taken as a convenient and necessary shorthand to designate a collection of disparate individuals and does not in any way imply that all members of that group are deemed to think, feel, and react homogeneously, nor that all *pieds-noirs* identify with this community at all times.

⁹⁷ Beginning life as *Pieds-Noirs Magazine* in 1990, four years into its existence, the name *Pieds-Noirs d'Hier et d'Aujourd'hui* was adopted which the journal retains to this day. Although the magazine has no stated associational allegiance, co-founder Jean Marc Lopez has close ties to the far right Union syndicale de défense des intérêts français repliés d'Algérie (USDIFRA). Consequently, the contents of the publication often reflect the priorities of USDIFRA and its off-shoot the Conseil national supérieur des rapatriés (CNRS).

recently published *Les rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord* by Valérie Esclangon-Morin contains a wealth of detail, but focuses very much on the interaction between the French state and various *rapatrié* groups, analysing 'les différentes mesures mises en place par les pouvoirs publics et face à elles, étudier la façon dont elles ont été reçues et acceptées par les rapatriés ainsi que les formes d'influence qu'exercent ces mêmes rapatriés sur l'État'.⁹⁸ While not denying the value of such an approach, indeed retaining the multi-directional approach to interaction, the intention here is to simultaneously expand the framework to include horizontal exchanges among various *pieds-noirs* associations, as well as between them and other groups such as *harkis*, Algerians in France, the media, and the academic community. The fulfilment of this agenda dictates a thematic organisation of material. This will also hopefully guard against a simply narrative history and instead facilitate an analysis of the many ways in which *pied-noir* associations have sought to mobilise and articulate visions of the past in service of the present, as well as how these interpretations have altered in the years since the end of French Algeria.

The *harki* community

Alongside the *pied-noir* population, this dissertation will also consider the *harki* community. *Harki* derives from the Arabic word 'harka', meaning movement. Although, the first *harka* was created in the Aurès by the ethnologist Jean Servier, it was Resident Minister Robert Lacoste who regularised and institutionalised their use as mobile units to undertake offensive military operations in February 1956.⁹⁹ By September 1957, there were approximately 10,000 *harkis*. This figure then rose to 61,600 in January 1961, before dropping back down to 5000 by April 1962.¹⁰⁰ However, as the conflict progressed, *harki* increasingly became a generic term signifying all native auxiliaries, which is the sense in which it will be used here.¹⁰¹ The number of *harkis* so defined fluctuated throughout the war, peaking at 210,000 in 1958, but falling considerably in the final months of the conflict.¹⁰² Principally of rural origin, illiterate, and unskilled, *harkis* were very different to the indigenous Muslim elite of colonial Algeria,

⁹⁸ Valérie Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord de 1956 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2007), p.18.

⁹⁹ Claude Liauzu, 'Préface' in Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères: paroles blessées: Une autre histoire de harkis*, (Lécherelle, 2006), p.14.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p.14.

¹⁰¹ *Harki* could thus refer to the *moghaznis* assigned to protecting the *Sections administratives spécialisées* (SAS), the French doctors, social workers and teachers charged with winning the hearts and minds of the Algerian people; the men who comprised the *Groupes d'auto défense* (GAD) tasked with protecting isolated villages; the *Groupes mobiles de sécurité* (GMS) of the rural police force; and finally the 'assas or guardians.

¹⁰² Charles-Robert Ageron, 'Le "drame des Harkis": mémoire ou histoire?' *Vingtième siècle*, 68 (2000), 3.

many of whom had opted for French nationality prior to 1954 and whose support of the French cause was often motivated by conviction rather than compulsion or necessity.¹⁰³

When the ceasefire was proclaimed on 19 March 1962, the *harkis* were generally given three options: engage in the regular French army which would mean going wherever the army went, accept *licenciement avec primes* and return to civilian life, or postpone making a definite choice by enrolling for a six month period as a civilian contractual agent.¹⁰⁴ There was disquiet among the *harkis* at this time, most famously captured by a *Cinq colonnes à l'une* interview with an auxiliary who confessed feeling his life in danger because 'J'ai travaillé sous le drapeau français'.¹⁰⁵ However, 21,000, or 81.2 per cent of those still in active service, felt sufficiently reassured by various guarantees to accept their final pay and hand over their uniforms.¹⁰⁶ Never having wanted to get caught up in the war in the first place, these men were keen to return to the lives they had been forced to suspend. 'Je préférais rester dans l'espoir de vivre enfin en paix dans mon pays avec les miens', explained one *harki*, 'j'ai donc rendu arme et paquetage'.¹⁰⁷ Such hopes were however quickly shattered as waves of terrible violence broke across the country. Although this process began in April 1962, the intensity of the massacres of the *harkis* and their families varied with July and August constituting the most acute months. There is no agreement on how many were killed during this period with estimates ranging from 'plusieurs milliers' to 150,000, although perhaps a better sense of the magnitude of the killings can be gained from consideration of anecdotal evidence such as that of the wife of a *harki* who lost twenty-eight members of her family and closest friends during this period.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ This elite comprised locally and nationally elected representatives; notables such as *Caïds*, *Bachagas* and *Aghas*; members of the liberal professions such as teachers and lawyers; as well as career soldiers and officers.

¹⁰⁴ Ageron, 'Le "drame des Harkis"', 4.

¹⁰⁵ 'Algérie fin de la guerre', *Cinq colonnes à l'une*, aired 6 June 1962 (Channel 1).

¹⁰⁶ With their lives and families in Algeria, *harkis* were understandably reluctant to leave. They had furthermore received guarantees from the FLN that they would not be subjected to reprisals, while the substantial number of French troops still present who had promised to provide protection for those who felt threatened provided further reassurance. Finally, the Evian Accords, while not making specific reference to the *harkis*, did contain clauses providing general guarantees of safety for civilians in Algeria in the post-ceasefire period. Ageron, 'Le "drame des Harkis"', 4. For comparative statistics on the number of *harkis* deemed to be at risk from the FLN see, Mohand Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenu harkis*, (Paris, 1993), pp.120-121. For the provisions made by the Evian Accords see, *Accords d'Évian*, Chapter II, Part A, Article 1; Chapter II, Part A, Article 2. Available at www.el-mouradia.dz/francais/algerie/histoire/accordevian.htm [16 October 2008].

¹⁰⁷ Brahim Sadouni, *Français sans patrie: La Reconnaissance*, (Rouen, 1985), pp.7, 97.

¹⁰⁸ The earliest estimate came from the *Le Monde* journalist Jean Lacouture who advanced a figure of 10,000 on 13 November 1962. Thirty years later, he revised his calculation upwards to 100,000. This is also the statistic quoted by the majority of *harki* and *pied-noir* associations, although some claims go as high as 150,000. Academics however, tend to congregate around the lower figure of 60,000 to 75,000, although Charles-Robert Ageron always refused to be more specific than 'plusieurs milliers'. William B. Cohen, 'The *Harkis*: History and Memory' in *Algeria and France 1800-2000*, p.168; Michel Roux, *Les harkis: les oubliés de l'histoire 1954-1991*, (Paris, 1991), p.203; Charles-Robert Ageron, 'Les supplétifs algériens dans l'armée française pendant la guerre d'Algérie', *Vingtième siècle*, 48 (October-

The scale and ferocity of this violence made the position of the *harkis* and their families in the newly independent Algeria untenable. France was the obvious choice of refuge, but with strictly enforced quotas in place, crossing the Mediterranean to safety was not a simple matter.¹⁰⁹ William Cohen claimed that government organised repatriation programmes brought 25,000 *harkis* and their dependants to the French mainland between 1962 and 1967, while a further 68,000 entered the country by unofficial means, frequently with the assistance of their former officers who acted in direct contravention of orders from their metropolitan-based superiors.¹¹⁰ Again, these figures are by no means consensual with other academic estimates ranging from 65,000 to 100,000.¹¹¹ Statistics were further complicated by the fact that there was more than one wave of arrivals. Although 1962 saw the largest disembarkations, there was a steady stream of refugees after this with spikes in 1965 and 1968 when many *harkis* who had been taken prisoner by the FLN were released. In light of this, the 1968 census figure of 138,458 ‘French Muslims’, the contemporary administrative label for *harkis* and former Muslim notables, of which 88,000 had been born in Algeria, is frequently cited.¹¹²

At least half of those lucky enough to make it to France, and certainly the vast majority of those who came through official channels, were initially placed in *centres d'accueil*.¹¹³ As with the *pieds-noirs*, the French government had not anticipated an *en masse* arrival of *harkis* and thus neither strategies nor structures were in place to provide for their accommodation. Camps were either hastily constructed or modified leaving many *harkis* living on sites that had recently housed suspected FLN and OAS militants. These camps, in places such as Rivesaltes, Saint-Maurice-l’Ardoise and Bias, were conceived of as temporary expedients that would gradually become obsolete as the *harkis* integrated into French society.¹¹⁴ And indeed some of the estimated 42,500 people who passed through the camps

December 1995), 12, 20. The anecdotal evidence is that of Fatima Besnaci-Lancou’s mother taken from her autobiographical memoir *Fille de harki: Le bouleversant témoignage d’une enfant de la guerre d’Algérie*, with Marie-Christine Ray, (Paris, 2005), p.37.

¹⁰⁹ The most infamous example of this was a telegram sent by Louis Joxe, Minister for Algerian Affairs, on 16 May 1962 reminding the High Commissioner that attempting to transfer auxiliaries to France was prohibited. This was followed by a confidential directive issued on 15 July stating that ‘Les supplétifs débarqués en métropole, en dehors du plan général, seront renvoyés en Algérie’. Cited in Benjamin Stora, *Algeria 1830-2000 A Short History*, (Ithaca, 2001), p.101.

¹¹⁰ Cohen, ‘The Harkis’, p.169.

¹¹¹ Emmanuel Brillet, ‘La contingence et la geste: le harki, l’indicible du “mouvement de l’histoire”’, in *L’époque de la disparition: Politique et esthétique*, ed. by Alain Brossat and Jean-Louis Déotte, (Paris, 2000), p.33; Roux, *Les harkis*, p.230.

¹¹² Mohand Hamoumou, ‘L’histoire des harkis et Français musulmans: la fin d’un tabou?’ in *La Guerre d’Algérie 1954-2004*, p.338.

¹¹³ Dominique Schnapper, ‘Preface’ in *Et ils sont devenus harkis*, p.8.

¹¹⁴ For a full list of the camps and their locations see Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, ‘Harkis: le paradoxe identitaire’, *Regards sur l’actualité*, 175 (November 1991), 36. For a detailed breakdown of the changing populations and functions of Saint-Maurice-l’Ardoise see Tom Charbit, ‘Sociographie des familles de harkis de Saint-Maurice-l’Ardoise. Synthèse partielle de l’enquête réalisée pour la

between 1962 and 1969 remained there only briefly before being dispersed into the wider populace.¹¹⁵ Others, however, were not so lucky and were simply transferred to other forms of government-allocated accommodation such as the specially created *hameaux forestiers* which operated along the same principles as the camps, albeit with slightly greater freedoms and employment in the forestry service for the men.¹¹⁶ An additional potential fate, especially in later years, was for *harkis* to be regrouped in purpose-built *cités urbaines* located on the outskirts of towns such as Lodève in the Hérault region. The unluckiest *harkis* were those deemed incapable, on grounds such as age or injury, of integrating and for whom the camps became their long-term homes. In 1981 there were still 28,500 people, or 3560 families, living in what the government termed *zones à forte concentration*, while the following year the Secretary of State for *rapatriés* estimated that almost half the *harki* population were suffering from ‘des difficultés matérielles sérieuses’.¹¹⁷ Almost a decade later, 100,000 members of the *harki* community were still considered to be ‘in difficulty’ with youth unemployment estimated to be as high as 80 per cent in some areas.¹¹⁸

These isolated institutional environments have become emblematic of the experience of *harkis* and their families in France and are deemed symptomatic of the wider process of forgetting to which the *harkis* and their role in the War of Independence were subjected, from whence comes the ubiquitous epithet ‘les oubliés de l’histoire’. Furthermore, in spite of the intensity and magnitude of their experiences, a *harki* memory of the War of Independence and its immediate aftermath was, for many years, notable by its absence within the community itself. ‘Nous ne parlions pas plus jamais de notre passé, comme si notre pays d’origine n’avait jamais existé’, one *filles de harki* explained.¹¹⁹ The reasons *harkis* were so reluctant to speak of their past were multiple and worked in varying combinations. Powerful external narratives, linguistic and cultural barriers, physical isolation, economic and social disempowerment, mixed with a potent sense of fear and exacerbated by the difficulty of articulating a past many were themselves still struggling to come to terms with all played their part in depriving the *harkis* of a voice in the years following their arrival in France. This

Direction de la Population et des Migrations’, (May 2005). Available at http://www.rapatries.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Sociographie_des_familles_de_harkis_de_Saint.pdf. [12 November 2008]

¹¹⁵ Wihtol de Wenden, ‘Harkis’, 36.

¹¹⁶ Initially forty-two such hamlets were established, although the number quickly rose to between 47 and 75 (not all were simultaneously operational); 23 hamlets were still in use in 1982. Maurice Faivre advances a slightly different set of statistics, claiming that between 1962 and 1963, 41,000 passed through the camps at Rivesaltes, St-Maurice-l’Ardoise, Bourg-Lastic, Larzac and Rye. In addition, 1800 soldiers were demobilised in the mainland while a further 1500 *harkis* were released from FLN prisons in 1965 and 1968 and gathered in the Château de Landas in France. Wihtol de Wenden, ‘Harkis’, 36; Maurice Faivre, ‘La communauté des harkis’, *Le Casoar*, 116 (January 1990), 39.

¹¹⁷ By this point these zones consisted principally of the hamlets and *cités*, as opposed to the camps. Hamoumou, ‘L’histoire des harkis’, p.339; Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenus harkis*, p.20.

¹¹⁸ Wihtol de Wenden, ‘Harkis’, 40.

¹¹⁹ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.109.

situation persisted until the 1970s when a new generation, the *filles de harkis*, matured and mobilised in order to rehabilitate the history and identity of their parents and by implication of themselves. Unlike the *pièdes-noirs* therefore, the gestation of a *harki* collective memory followed a more circuitous route.

Interestingly, the historiography of the *harkis* has mirrored the history of the community and its memory. Although *les oubliés de l'histoire* was for many years an accurate description from an academic perspective, the situation today is very different. Since the beginning of the 1990s, numerous books and articles exploring the history of the *harkis* and their families have appeared, frequently written by historians and sociologists who are themselves descended from *harkis*.¹²⁰ In light of the long-standing silence that surrounded this aspect of the Algerian War, these works have tended to focus primarily on establishing a comprehensive account of the war and post-war years. Other authors have chosen to concentrate on the second generation and have adopted a more sociological approach, highlighting the difficulties these men and women have had integrating into French society and the *crise d'identité* provoked by feeling torn between two countries and cultures.¹²¹ What is unusual, however, in a field where studies of memories of the war have been so prominent, certainly since the 1990s, is how little attention has been devoted to this particular aspect of *harki* history. Although recent years have witnessed a more concerted effort to obtain testimonies from within the community, this corpus remains relatively small.¹²² It is also characterised by a lack of sustained analysis of the mechanisms of transmission at work, the role of actors and narratives outside of the community, and of the impact of evolutions in the broader social and commemorative context in France. This thesis is intended to begin to redress the balance by focusing on the processes through which representations of the history

¹²⁰ Particularly well-regarded within this canon are, Roux, *Les harkis*; Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenu harkis*; Jean-Jacques Jordi and Mohand Hamoumou, *Les harkis, une mémoire enfouie*, (Paris, 1999); Laurent Muller, *Le silence des harkis*, (Paris, 1999); Nordine Boulhaïs, *Histoire des harkis du Nord de la France*, (Paris, 2005).

¹²¹ See amongst others, 'Les harkis et leurs enfants', *H&M*, 1135 (September 1990); Mohand Hamoumou, 'Révoltes des enfants d'anciens harkis: quelques clés pour comprendre', *Esprit*, 174 (September 1991), 112-114; Laurent Muller, 'Les enfants de harkis et leurs parents: entre distance et proximité', *Cultures et Sociétés*, 4 (Winter 1994), 7-16; Laurent Muller, 'Le silence des pères et l'identité problématique des enfants de harkis', *Cultures et Sociétés*, 8 (Winter 1996), 39-48; Mohamed Kara, *Les tentations du repli communautaire: le cas des Franco-Maghrébins en général et des enfants de harkis en particulier*, (Paris, 1997); Stéphanie Abrial, *Les enfants de harkis de la révolte à l'intégration*, (Paris, 2001); Emmanuel Brillet, 'A Remarkable Heritage: The 'Daily Round' of the Children of the Harkis, between Merger and Villification', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 22.2-3 (July-November 2003), 333-345; Géraldine Enjelvin, 'Les Harkis en France: carte d'identité française, identité harkie à la carte?', *MCF*, 11.2 (May 2003), 161-173.

¹²² For collections of received testimony see Bernard Derrieu et al., *La Cité de Tapis: une communauté de rapatriés d'Algérie*, (Pézenas, 1997); Stéphan Gladieu and Dalila Kerchouche, *Destins de harkis: Aux racines d'un exil*, (Paris, 2003); Jean-Jacques Jordi, 'Khélifa Haroud: harki 1957-1967', in *Des hommes et des femmes en guerre d'Algérie*, ed. by Jean-Charles Jauffret, (Paris, 2003), pp.360-361; Francis Mauro and Bathoche Mahious, *Compiègne, terre d'accueil pour les harkis: Témoignages*, (Agincourt, 2004); Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères*; Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis harkis*, (Paris, 2006).

and memory of the *harki* community have been constructed and reconstructed by various groups over the years.

One of the main memory carriers who offered interpretations of the *harkis* and their history during the period when they were not speaking for themselves were the *pieds-noirs*. While this was by no means a disinterested act, it also reflected the longstanding links between the two communities. People tend to forget, Janice Gross remarks, that the settlers lived side-by-side with the indigenous population ‘often as neighbours and even as friends’ a quotidian fact that created ‘a fabric of shared experience and authentic cultural memory’.¹²³ Although complex and not always harmonious, these relationships did not simply cease when the two groups crossed the Mediterranean in the 1960s, although they did change. Posing questions about just how ‘cloistered’ memories of the War of Independence are, the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* therefore offer one of the most interesting and sustained histories of interaction out of all the memory bearers related to the war. This makes them a strong choice for a comparative study, as does their mutual experience of exile following the conclusion of a war in which they were on the losing side. Furthermore, unlike Nora and Rousso, history and memory are not treated as wholly separate concepts by *pieds-noirs* and *harkis*, especially in their collective commemorative activities where the two are regularly combined. More than the simple fact of amalgamation, what is fascinating about this are the coincidences in the rationales that underpin this phenomenon, the ends to which it is used, and the implications in terms of their relationship with other memory carriers and narrative constructions of the Franco-Algerian past.

Yet in spite of the similarities, there are several key differences between *pieds-noirs* and *harkis*, the roots of which extend back into the colonial period. Consequently, in 1962 the two groups found themselves in very different positions, producing two distinct post-war trajectories in terms of the development of their collective memories. Exploring these disparities over the decades since the end of the War of Independence enables us to appreciate the continually evolving nature of collective representations, as well as to analyse the impact of changing broader social, political and cultural contexts. This arguably brings us full circle back to Nora’s idea of a history of the ‘second degree’, only with a less rigid and more inclusive definition of the scope of such an undertaking and of the actors involved.

¹²³ Janice Gross, ‘France and Algeria: Performing the “Impossible Memory” of a Shared Past’, in *Memory, Empire and Postcolonialism*, p.217.

The Pied-Noir Community

1. From Practical Beginnings to the Cultural Turn, 1962-1991

Practical beginnings

The importance of studying *pied-noir* associations lies in the fact that they are ‘des organismes capables de rassembler sur des thèmes qui reflètent les préoccupations du plus grand nombre’, even if that number does not in any way include all *pieds-noirs* at all times.¹²⁴ This was particularly true during the early years of their existence. Groups such as ANFANOMA, described by Jordi as the most representative *pied-noir* association in the 1950s and 1960s, were born out of the unprecedented need for ‘entraide et solidarité’ on the part of the recently exiled community in light of the perceived failure of the state to provide for the new arrivals.¹²⁵ ANFANOMA, who claimed a membership of 250,000 by 1962, thus dedicated itself to ‘aider les rapatriés à résoudre certains problèmes particulières’, namely obtaining shelter, work, and compensation.¹²⁶ Organisations like this formed quickly in part because they were able to capitalise on an established tradition of lobbying and structures developed by *Algérie-française* partisans during the War of Independence. Indeed, the speed at which *pied-noir* associations emerged is striking, as is how enduring they have proved to be with ANFANOMA celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2007. By championing immediate and widely shared concerns such as *logement* and *indemnisation*, the first *pied-noir* associations made themselves into ‘un instrument identificatoire, permettent à la communauté disloquée de se reconnaître et d’être reconnue’.¹²⁷

In addition to serving as mirrors reflecting the priorities of the community at given moments, associations also function as valuable ‘greniers communs’; storing but also sorting the stock of collective memories before deciding which reserves to draw upon in particular circumstances.¹²⁸ Today it is this facet, particularly in its combative *guerres de mémoire* guise, which attracts the most attention from scholars, the media, and the *pieds-noirs* themselves. Yet interestingly this aspect was not to the fore during the initial phase of association formation. Instead, practical concerns dominated until the 1970s when these

¹²⁴ Valérie Esclançon-Morin, *Les rapatriés d’Afrique du Nord de 1956 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2007), p.19. Although Rosemary Averell Manes claims that 10 to 15 per cent of the *pied-noir* population are formally affiliated to a *pied-noir* association, establishing reliable membership figures for these associations is virtually impossible, not least because few openly declare exact numbers. Indeed, even estimating how many associations exist has proven contentious.

¹²⁵ Jean-Jacques Jordi, ‘Archéologie et structure du réseau de sociabilité rapatrié et pied-noir’, *Provence Historique*, 47 (1997), 179.

¹²⁶ Marcel Fenouillet, ‘Naissance et histoire de l’ANFANOMA’, in *Mémoires de la colonisation: Relations colonisateurs-colonisés*, ed. by Régine Goutalier, (Paris, 1994), p.110.

¹²⁷ Joëlle Hureau, ‘Associations et souvenir chez les français rapatriés d’Algérie’, in *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Rioux, (Paris, 1990), p.517.

¹²⁸ Joëlle Hureau, *La mémoire des pieds-noirs de 1830 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2001), p.259.

began to give way to a more commemorative orientation. It is therefore important to explore the reasons behind this change in direction and the impact it had upon the *pied-noir* associational network.

Practical rallying points that could be translated into tangible gains were the basis of the majority of early *pied-noir* associations, providing unifying foundations that later cultural incarnations built upon. Addressing immediate concerns common to all newly arrived *rapatriés* gave groups such as ANFANOMA a strong and broad base of support. This allowed them to tap into the rapidly developing culture of abandonment and victimhood, although this is not to deny that the needs of the *pieds-noirs* in this period were urgent and often inadequately met. Seeking clear progress from the government on a raft of issues from accommodation to amnesties, in 1965 the Front national des rapatriés (FNR) was created. Uniting representatives from the principal associations of the time including ANFANOMA and its main rival, the Rassemblement national des français d'Afrique du Nord et d'outre-mer (RANFRAN), its objective was to 'poursuivre plus énergiquement l'aboutissement de toutes les revendications morales et matérielles' of the *rapatrié* community.¹²⁹ The FNR was motivated by the belief that only by unifying their voices could the *pieds-noirs* hope to attract the government's attention. Although the actual impact of the *pieds-noirs* was negligible in terms of modifying electoral patterns, it took years for this to be confirmed, leaving ample time for their perceived block-vote potential to be capitalised upon.¹³⁰ No one association was more successful in politicking in this fashion than the Rassemblement et coordination unitaires des rapatriés et spoilés (RECOURS) formed in 1976 with the precise intent of exploiting what they regarded as the only 'arme efficace' which remained to the *pieds-noirs*, 'leur bulletin de vote', by mobilising the community to vote tactically in order to pressure the incumbent government into concessions.¹³¹

The issue that brought together the moral, material and political aspects of early *pied-noir* activism most effectively was indemnification. It also emerged as the most consistently high profile of the initial causes championed by *pied-noir* associations with accommodation, the most immediate concern in the summer of 1962, ceding the spotlight as vast building programmes were quickly implemented. In 1963, the single-issue GNPI was established with the goal of promoting 'les mesures susceptibles de permettre la réparation et l'indemnisation des préjudices de toutes natures qu'elles ont pu subir du fait des événements survenus dans les territoires d'Outre-Mer qui étaient antérieurement placés sous la souveraineté, le protectorat ou

¹²⁹ Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.165.

¹³⁰ The impression that the *pied-noir* community possessed the power to influence elections stemmed largely from nationalist Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignacour's garnering of 5 per cent of the vote in the 1965 election, placing him fourth overall. His campaign, managed by Jean-Marie Le Pen, revolved around mobilising disgruntled *Algérie-française* partisans, but was sufficiently effective to split the vote on the right and force de Gaulle into a second round run off against François Mitterrand.

¹³¹ Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.239.

la tutelle de la France'.¹³² The remit of the GNPI thus extended beyond the *pieds-noirs* to all those who had been dispossessed as a result of decolonisation. This scope was reflected in early issues of their *Bulletin d'information*, which carried reports on the progress of indemnification campaigns across the globe.¹³³ However, this geographical breadth was combined with a very narrow definition of purpose. Other *rapatrié* causes were eschewed lest they distract from the overriding goal of just recompense for material losses. As a 1964 report on the annual *pied-noir* gathering at Nîmes made clear, 'Il est délicat pour le GNPI de participer à toutes les réunions aux quelles nous sommes conviés. Sans doute conviendrait-il de se limiter aux seules réunions ayant pour objet essentiel sinon unique le problème de l'indemnisation'.¹³⁴

For the GNPI, compensation was a judicial issue, demanded solely on the basis that it was a legal right afforded to all *rapatriés* under the French constitution. The immense detail into which many of the articles went suggests that while readers may have been highly informed, they were unlikely to have been inspired. This contrasted with the approach adopted by other organisations that took up the indemnification cause but combined constitutional rights with the more emotive idea of a national duty and debt owed by France to its victimised citizens. The 1975 indemnification guide, *Plaidoyer pour un million de victimes*, aptly expresses this material and moral fusion, juxtaposing practical advice and layman's explanations with impassioned paragraphs evoking the plight of these 'nouveaux parais', 'citoyens de la deuxième zone' whose only crime had been their desire to 'demeurer français'.¹³⁵ The empirical-emotional synthesis proved highly effective in giving indemnification and those associations who championed it a shelf life beyond the various measures intended to resolve the issue. This became particularly important in 1987 with the fourth, and widely touted final, compensation law pushed for and passed under the premiership of Jacques Chirac.¹³⁶ Incumbent Secretary of State for *rapatriés* André Santini referred to the legislation as 'la pièce maîtresse de la politique en faveur des rapatriés' when selling it to the Sénat on 12 June 1987.¹³⁷ The series of partial and compromised laws of 1970, 1974, and 1978 paled in comparison to this latest proposal, which was deemed comprehensive and generous enough to win the approval of many *pied-noirs*. Even

¹³² Article 2 of the GNPI.

¹³³ The GNPI's *Bulletin* was published monthly from its inception until 1971. After this point it appeared on a roughly bi-annual basis, although both its schedule and its quality have been highly erratic.

¹³⁴ *Bulletin d'information du GNPI*, 9 (15 July 1964), 20.

¹³⁵ Jacques Ribs, *Paidoyer pour un million de victimes*, (Paris, 1975), p.12. This dualistic approach was also adopted in the prequel volume *L'indemnisation des Française dépossédés outre-mer*, (Paris, 1971).

¹³⁶ Indeed it was almost the final word, its provisions not being substantially modified until 2005.

¹³⁷ Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.302.

RECOURS *porte-parole* Jacques Roseau admitted that the provisions were satisfactory; although he added that the law had been a long time coming.¹³⁸

By effectively settling the twenty-five year old indemnification issue, the law of 16 July 1987 removed, almost overnight, an integral plank from the platform of a large number of *pied-noir* associations forcing a radical rethink of how unity, activism and thus their existence could be maintained.¹³⁹ It cannot be mere coincidence that in June 1987 ANFANOMA's journal, *France-Horizon*, devoted a full page to defending the utility of continuing to have *rapatrié* associations, arguing 'Il s'agit de la défense et l'illustration de notre patrimoine matériel, bien sur, mais aussi d'ordre intellectuel, moral et spirituel'.¹⁴⁰ Some associations adapted better than others to the new circumstances with the GNPI finding the transition particularly difficult for obvious reasons. Although they did allow some dilution of their purity of focus, this cannot be regarded as part of any concerted attempt to broaden their remit for the post-indemnification period since their fundamental campaign style and content remained unchanged on the basis that the provisions of 1987 were of only a 'très partielle' nature, containing 'importantes lacunes' and 'quelques exclusions arbitraires'.¹⁴¹ This becomes particularly apparent when the GNPI's efforts are placed alongside those of associations like ANFANOMA who quickly recognised that the stakes had altered and consciously adjusted their priorities to accommodate this.¹⁴² Without ever renouncing their original goals, the association now acknowledged that 'les préoccupations matérielles ont longtemps été dominantes sans être exclusives'. This allowed ANFANOMA to open itself to 'la mémoire et à la culture' with the result that, as the current president Yves Sainsot explained, 'défense et mémoire sont deux domaines aujourd'hui équilibrées'.¹⁴³ This flexibility has helped ensure that despite being significantly diminished in size from their 250,000 heyday in the 1960s, ANFANOMA remains one of the most prominent *pied-noir* associations.

¹³⁸ 'Plateau: Enrico Macias, Martha Villalonga et Jacques Roseau', *Midi 2*, aired 27 June 1987, (Channel 2). Made at a national *rassemblement* to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the arrival of the *pieds-noirs*, Roseau's comments illustrate that the 1987 law was not formulated in a vacuum. Rather it emerged out of a favourable combination of factors including the election of the broadly sympathetic Chirac as Prime Minister in 1986, the popular appointment of André Santitni, and the pressure placed upon the government by the approaching anniversary to draw a line under the *rapatrié* 'problem'.

¹³⁹ Of course the indemnification issue did not disappear entirely since it was always possible to find room for improvement in the legislation, particularly in its application. However, compensation never regained its early prominence after 1987.

¹⁴⁰ Yves Sainsot, 'Notre légitime défense', *FH*, 283 (June 1987), 4.

¹⁴¹ *Bulletin d'information du GNPI*, 143 (April 1996), 1-2; 144 (September 1996), 8.

¹⁴² It should, however, be noted that the GNPI remained sufficiently successful to still be publishing its *Bulletin* as late as autumn 2000.

¹⁴³ ANFANOMA questionnaire response. Sainsot's remarks are supported by Marcel Fenouillet who described ANFANOMA's objective in the mid-90s as 'd'obtenir une réhabilitation de l'histoire des Français d'Outre-Mer'. 'Naissance et histoire de l'AFANOMA', p.111.

‘Sauver une culture en péril’

ANFANOMA’s move into the realms of memory and culture was part of a wider trend that saw these two topics steadily rise to the top of association agendas. Esclangon-Morin regards this development as the next natural stage in the maturation process; after initial preoccupations with integration and success came ‘le temps de la réactivation d’un mécanisme identitaire’.¹⁴⁴ Only once immediate material concerns had been dealt with did the *pieds-noirs* find time to consider what it meant to be a *pied-noir* in a broader sense. As one Algérois gentleman recounted:

Quand vous arrivez et que vous avez tout perdu, il faut tout recommencer. Alors, au début la priorité c’est de trouver un travail, se loger tout refaire. Après, mais seulement quelques années après, quand tout allait mieux et que j’avais retrouvé une situation, j’ai commencé à m’investir dans les associations, dans le travail de mémoire.¹⁴⁵

This individual trajectory appears to have been mirrored at the collective level with the 1987 law playing a key role. However, others have sought explanations for the change of focus beyond the community itself. In contrast to Esclangon-Morin, Buono highlights the events of May 1968 and the subsequent flourishing of sub-national identities as crucial to the *pieds-noirs* because it enabled them to press for recognition on the basis of a unique regional identity, akin to a Breton or a Corsican.¹⁴⁶ Evidence in support of this theory can be found in the early 1970s trend towards *amicales* centred upon particular regions (Amicale des Oraniens des Bouches-du-Rhône), villages and *quartiers* (Amicale des anciens de Bab-el-Oued), or even occupations (Les anciens des écoles agriculture d’Algérie).

Community-specific developments thus combined with broader social changes to produce a fertile soil in which a new basis of *pied-noir* unity and identity took root. The association that exemplifies this cultural turn is the Cercle Algérieniste. Formed in 1973 by a group of self-identified ‘jeunes pieds-noirs’, the Cercle appreciated that the times were changing and that a new kind of association would be needed to ‘redonner une vigueur nouvelle à la communauté “Algérie Française”’, in order to ‘retremper notre foi’.¹⁴⁷ This new faith was to be propagated through the organisation’s quarterly journal, *L’Algérieniste*, which informed members in 1976 that:

¹⁴⁴ Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.327.

¹⁴⁵ Cited in Éric Savarese, *Algérie, la guerre des mémoires*, (Paris, 2007), p.108.

¹⁴⁶ Clarisse Buono, *Pieds-noirs de père en fils*, (Paris, 2004), p.66.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Manifeste’, *L’Algérieniste*, (1975).

Le temps des associations de rapatriés, que nous connaissons, depuis 1962, qui ont été si utiles à soulager les misères et à défendre les intérêts de nos compatriots, s'éteindra certainement dans les années à venir et nous restons seuls, face à nous-mêmes, avec l'énorme devoir de ne pas laisser engloutir l'âme de notre peuple.¹⁴⁸

The mission of the Cercle was thus clear from the outset and expressed in their motto 'sauver une culture et une communauté en péril'. Beyond the pages of their journal, this goal was to be achieved through a range of culturally orientated initiatives including study groups, a literary prize, exhibitions, and participation in 'manifestations culturelles et de souvenir', all of which would serve to 'faire connaître les plus belles pages de notre histoire, dénoncer à l'occasion le mensonge et l'hypocrisie qui l'entourent, raconter ce que fut la vie quotidienne de notre peuple...préserver son langage, son esprit, et ses qualités...'.¹⁴⁹ The basic premise was to mobilise memory and history in the service of 'truth' and against the threat of oblivion.¹⁵⁰ Today this is the essence of most *pied-noir* associations, but in the early 1970s the Cercle, by consciously redirecting the focus away from the material and into the memorial, represented a new and innovative approach to communal identification.

Where the Cercle led however, others followed, with *PNM* declaring in its fifth issue: 'Notre but n'est pas d'alimenter la complainte du vieux Pied-Noir spoilé...mais de participer à la régénération du tissu communautaire et de réunir les générations sur le devenir d'une réalité culturelle incontournable: L'âme Pied-Noir'.¹⁵¹ The growing importance of culture in *pied-noir* associations signalled an acknowledgement of the utility of the concept as a unifying and adherence-garnering tool. With the efficacy of basing unity on material loss declining, associations had to find a new common denominator. History and memory, embodied in the notion of an endangered culture, proved eminently suitable to the task, providing an emotionally resonant, malleable, and renewable resource. A virtuous circle of interaction was thus created whereby:

Les identités collectives sont investies dans le processus de reconstruction du passé, car c'est aussi à travers l'émergence et la définition d'une mémoire collective que le groupe prend conscience de lui-même, qu'ils dispose des outils lui permettant de se définir en tant que tel.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ *L'Algérieniste*, (1976), 5.

¹⁴⁹ *L'Algérieniste*, (1975).

¹⁵⁰ Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p. 13.

¹⁵¹ 'Un magazine d'avenir: L'âme Pied Noir', *PNM*, 5 (January 1990), 5.

¹⁵² Savarese, *Algérie*, p.46.

What the Cercle Algérieniste made into a credo was a fear of forgetting which was in reality the fear of being forgotten, a fate that could be avoided by joining together to preserve the characteristics that epitomised the uniqueness of the *pied-noir* identity. Defining exactly what these attributes were was not necessarily a smooth process, nor was agreeing what label to subsume them under as demonstrated by the lengthy debates in the early issues of *L'Algérieniste* over what term of self-identification should be used. In a bid to resolve the issue once and for all, a questionnaire was distributed to members. The results revealed that 'rapatrié' was widely reviled because it denied the *francité* of the community, while 'Français d'Algérie' was felt to restrict identity too narrowly to the war years, leaving 'Algériens d'Expression Français' or 'Francoalgériens' to be mooted along with 'Algérienistes' as possible alternatives. No clear winner could be declared on the basis of the 223 responses received, although ultimately 'pied-noir' emerged as the victor simply in terms of frequency and consistency of use across the years.¹⁵³ That the Cercle felt the need to have this debate is indicative of the wider context in which the definition of *pied-noir* was moving beyond the purely legalistic idea of a person deserving of compensation on the basis of their status as French citizens. The desire to be recognised as *français à part entière* embodied in the early campaigns of associations such as ANFAMONA increasingly had to be reconciled with new notions of the community as *français entièrement à part*. Crucially however the *pieds-noirs* wanted to be *entièrement à part* on their own terms, coming to see their distinctiveness as something to be proudly proclaimed and actively defended through the medium of organisations like the Cercle against the assimilationist pressures of French society. Learning to hold these two notions of identity in a productive tension was the task of associations through the 1970s and 1980s. The shape of this new identity would take several years to solidify and would draw on a range of sources, both old and new. What is striking, however, is the extent of the consensus that was established and the effectiveness with which it was then codified by associations.

¹⁵³ Maurice Calmein, 'Appellation contrôlée', *L'Algérieniste*, (1977), 4-5.

2. Developing the *Pied-Noir* Lexicon

French Algeria

Although the array of subjects treated by *pied-noir* associations is vast, there is a core canon of constantly highlighted themes that underline particular attributes of the *pied-noir* identity and patrimony. What is striking is how similar these are to the poles around which individual *pied-noir* attentions gravitated in the years following the end of French Algeria as indicated by the slew of memoirs and journals published during this period.¹⁵⁴ In the translation from individual to collective expression, the basic content of *pied-noir* history and memory has not altered substantially. Instead, associations appear to have built upon the foundations of individual testimony, centralising and codifying the narratives employed while simultaneously strengthening the weight of evidence behind these claims by virtue of being able to group multiple, mutually reinforcing accounts under the umbrella of a single organisation.

The establishment of a successful collective memory requires that its contents be accepted by and deemed relevant to the constituents of that particular body. Groups labour to create stable histories and memories that are resistant to unsanctioned interpretations, both internal and external, therefore those elements that cannot obtain wider legitimation tend to be the nuances of personal experience lost in the translation from individual to collective representations. While there are always exceptions, the pattern observed here is that deviations from the quickly established norm diminish over the life of *pied-noir* associations as the central identity of the group and its members becomes increasingly clearly defined and firmly rooted. The observation of Anne Roche from her *pied-noir* oral interview sample that ‘nos témoins dans leur majorité ne cherchent pas à être originaux, mais à valider leur témoignage par la réitération de faits (historiques et stylistiques) déjà connus et acceptés dans leur groupe de référence’ is borne out at the collective level where the reinforcement, and thus substantiation, of a familiar and accepted set of narratives takes priority over novelty and nuance.¹⁵⁵

In light of this, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the principal discourses advanced by *pied-noir* associations, their progressive distillation into a cohesive lexicon and the ends to which this glossary has been mobilised. Consideration shall also be given to the ways in which the past has been moulded to suit present needs and what this reveals about the self-perception and commemorative needs of the *pied-noir* community. The most prominent

¹⁵⁴ For a sample of these memoirs see, Francine Dessaigne, *Déracinés!*, (Paris, 1964); Francine Dessaigne, *Journal d'une mère de famille pied noir*, (Paris, 1962); Josette Sutra, *Algérie mon amour: Constantine 1920-1962*, (Paris, 1979); Fernande Stora, *L'Algérie pour mémoire*, (Paris, 1978); Marie-Jeanne Rey, *Mémoires d'une écorchée vive*, (Paris, 1987).

¹⁵⁵ Anne Roche, ‘Pieds-noirs: le “retour”’, *MCF*, 2.2 (1994), 159.

and widely cited themes from *pied-noir* organisations and journals will thus be used as an entry point into a broader examination of the *pied-noir* worldview and system of historical logic. Following contemplation of the apparent paradox of an identity grounded in an idyllic conception of Algeria under French control, but which was in fact forged when colonial rule ended, it will assess the preferential place accorded to life prior to 1954 through the prism of the three principal self-validating historical ‘truths’ on which the present-day collective *pied-noir* identity is based: inter-ethnic harmony, entitlement, and innocence. This will then be contrasted with presentations of the War of Independence in *pied-noir* associations and literature in order to highlight the unequal weight accorded to the post-Evian period and the messages this is intended to convey.

‘Si nous partons c’est contre coeur’

The identity that *pied-noir* associations have established for themselves and their members is based around a series of contrasts: between then and now, between France and *là-bas*, between the French and themselves. The starkest, but also most useful, of these juxtapositions is between a perfect past and an imperfect present. In order to function successfully associations need to be able to unify disparate individuals around certain common axes. With respect to the *pied-noir* community, the most obvious factor on which to base such unity is exile, the one experience shared by all members of the community. Not only was this a moment of great trauma, it also represents the point at which the *pied-noir* identity was born, hence its place at the heart of all associations. Consequently, the history and memory of the exodus is something that is actively cultivated as *the* foundational event for *pieds-noirs*, representing the ‘open sesame’ that allows entry into the community.¹⁵⁶ The summer of 1962 emerges in associational literature as the clear demarcation between then and now; between a happy, carefree life in Algeria and a difficult metropolitan trajectory marked by misery and suffering. Construed as a wholly negative experience from departure through arrival, these few weeks would, as Jordi notes, ‘structure a memory and forge a collective mentality that persists to this day’.¹⁵⁷

Recollections tend to focus on the ‘final morning’, with the decision to leave presented as a deeply reluctant but necessary one; ‘si nous partons c’est contre coeur’.¹⁵⁸ Violence, whether the specific death of someone close or the general sense of insecurity that stemmed from the escalation of the conflict in its final months, is often cited as the crucial

¹⁵⁶ Clarisse Buono, *Pieds-noirs de père en fils*, (Paris, 2004), p.81.

¹⁵⁷ Jean-Jacques Jordi, ‘The Creation of the Pieds-Noirs: Arrival and Settlement in Marseilles, 1962’, in *Europe’s Invisible Migrants*, ed. by Andrea L. Smith (Amsterdam, 2003), p.63.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Les rapatriés’, *Faire face*, aired 24 November 1961, (Channel 1).

factor prompting the realisation that staying was no longer a viable option. Articles entitled ‘L’A-Dieu’, ‘Un enfant quitte Oran’, and ‘Sur le bateau’ indicate the key stages of the process. Their contents stress the chaos of the roads, airports, and ports; the queuing, often over several days, without food or water; the constant fear of FLN attacks; and the pitiful sight of families trying to carry entire lives in a suitcase. These evocations are frequently accompanied by powerful visual images (see Appendix A). All accounts feature, and indeed often end with, one last lingering look at Algeria and a contemplation of the magnitude of what was occurring: ‘Lorsque le bateau prendra le large, je regarderai longtemps la côte s’estomper jusqu’à ne plus devenir qu’un mince liseré bleu tout en pensant que nous ne reverrions pas ce pays de sitôt, sinon jamais’.¹⁵⁹ The hope, following this painful separation from their homeland, was for a sympathetic welcome in France. ‘[O]n cherchait pour quelque chose,’ recalled one *pied-noir*, ‘[mais] on trouvait rien’.¹⁶⁰ The coldness of the reception provided by their imagined national community left a profound impression and has remained a source of considerable bitterness. Exile thus proved a double rupture, irrevocably separating the community both from Algeria and from the metropolitan French.

In the years following 1962, the locus of *pied-noir* identity coalesced around a collective self-perception defined negatively against France and, in many ways, against the country they left behind which, as an independent nation, had become unrecognisable to many. Over time however, this notion of difference acquired positive connotations and associations began to proudly present themselves and their adherents as *entièrement à part* on the basis of unique cultural and historical legacies. The regional particularities of colonial Algeria thus became cultural differences in France, a progression that alludes to the other central transformation of this period: the evolution from individual *français d’Algérie* into a community of *pieds-noirs*. As associations took over from individual activists as the principal memory carriers for the *rapatrié* population, the experience of a ‘bannissement individuel’ was converted into the unifying theme of ‘une mort collective’.¹⁶¹ Although the seeds for this transformation were sown during the *pieds-noirs*’ first decades in France, what brought them to fruition was the reorientation of priorities from material to cultural and commemorative that took place during the 1970s and 1980s. The ascendancy of organisations like the Cercle Algérieniste prompted a conscious appraisal of the contours of *pied-noir* identity that had been steadily solidifying beneath surface preoccupations with the practicalities of reinstallation.

¹⁵⁹ Danielle Amendos, ‘Histoire d’exode’. *L’Algérieniste*, 106 (June 2004), 8.

¹⁶⁰ ‘L’Algérie dix ans après. Deuxième volet’, *Quatrième mardi*, aired 30 May 1972, (Channel 1).

¹⁶¹ Michèle Baussant, *Pieds-noirs mémoires d’exils*, (Paris, 2002), p.7.

‘Nos souvenirs sont notre avenir’

The counterpoint to this symbolic mass death was that disparate pre-war lives, when placed in the hands of associations, were amalgamated into a collective vision of French Algeria. Once again, a clear continuum exists between the visual and textual vocabulary of initial accounts by authors such as Marie-Jeanne Rey and Francine Dessaigne and that of journals such as *L'Algérieniste* or *Aux échos d'Alger*, not least because the works of these authors were widely reproduced in association publications. Algeria is presented throughout as a paradise lost; a status based explicitly on its geographical and climatic specificities. As Jean Marc Lopez, co-founder of *PNM*, remembers, Algeria was a place where ‘Le cadre naturel était tellement magnifique, les couleurs si vives, les odeurs si douces, que nous n’avions pas besoin de grand chose pour être heureux’.¹⁶² Undiminished by the passage of time, these sensory impressions retain the power to transport *pieds-noirs* back to their lost homeland. ‘Tout à coup,’ Francette Mendosa explained to her readers, ‘un mode de vie, une ambiance, un monde bigarré, une odeur particulière vous imprègnent. Vous êtes sur un sol familier, très familier’.¹⁶³

Although the *pieds-noirs* had left Algeria, the reverse was not true. As the author and editor Louis Gardel revealed: ‘Comme les autres pieds-noirs, j’ai perdu l’Algérie. Mais elle ne m’a pas quitté. Elle ne me quittera jamais. Elle est en moi jusqu’à ma mort. Je suis fait d’elle’.¹⁶⁴ His sentiments are reflected in association literature where the notion of a unique and irreplaceable land underlies virtually every page of almost every journal. The forms these evocations take are multiple: *L'Algérieniste* and *PNM*, for example, both had long running ‘Villes et villages’ features which sought to present the history, but also recreate the ambiance, of various significant Algerian towns. An additional flavour of the past was provided through recipe columns or humorously conveyed through cartoons. *PNM*’s ‘le gang du Sebou’, a mischievous trio of stereotyped children which consisted of Ernest the blonde European ring leader, Driss, the Arabe with an unbridled love of couscous but an aversion to soap, and Izaak from the Jewish community, recalled the fun-loving side of a carefree life *là-bas* (see Appendix B). What the invocation of an idealised *Algérie française* demonstrates is that the loss experienced by the *pied-noir* community was not just measured materially, but ‘l’atteignit dans l’âme’.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Cited in Danielle Michel-Chich, *Déracinés: les pieds-noirs aujourd’hui*, (Paris, 2000), p.16.

¹⁶³ Francette Mendosa, ‘Le mot de la Présidente’, *EA*, 2 (May 1982), 1.

¹⁶⁴ Monique Ayoun and Jean-Pierre Stora, *Mon Algérie: 62 personnalités témoignent*, (Paris, 1989), p.252.

¹⁶⁵ Camille Brière, *Ceux qu’on appelle les Pieds Noirs ou 150 ans de l’Histoire d’un peuple*, (Paris, 1984), p.9.

Collating these various *souvenirs* in a printed format complemented the commemorative functions of annual *rassemblements*, enabling individual *pieds-noirs* to locate and attach significance to their own experiences within those of a larger aggregate. Associations thus conferred upon themselves the task of actively promoting and protecting this cultural patrimony, in order to create a memorial store for both the contemporary community and for posterity. In this way, the personal *devoir de mémoire* that inspired Roger Colozzi to speak of 'le souvenir impérissable' that he intended to guard 'jusqu'à mon souffle ultime', was transferred to associations and became incumbent upon the community as a whole.¹⁶⁶ Benjamin Stora has referred to this as the 'onzième commandement', after the novel by Andre Rossfelder, while Josseline Revel-Mouroz of the Centre d'études pied-noir (CEPN) made it clear that:

Nous avons une identité culturelle bien plus large, bien plus riche, qu'il serait malhonnête d'occultier. Nos parents, grands-parents et arrière-grands-parents nous ont laissé un patrimoine que nous volons, que nous devons transmettre. Hélas, ce patrimoine a été bien amputé en 1962, mais le devoir de mémoire demeure.¹⁶⁷

This defence was rendered particularly imperative by the fact that French Algeria no longer existed physically, but only in the minds of those who once lived there, hence the prevalence of the idea that 'Nos souvenirs sont notre avenir'.¹⁶⁸ The consequent status of *pieds-noirs* as living archives means that the information presented in journals can in some ways be viewed as making a constructive contribution to the history of French Algeria, providing access to information and sources beyond the narrow confines of official archives, particularly with respect to events for which few conventional records survive. This can furthermore be tied into a wider historiographical debate concerning the role of nostalgia, the term most commonly associated with the *pied-noir* community. The word 'nostalgia' derives from the Greek *nostos* meaning homecoming and *algos* meaning pain and arises typically in the context of cultural stress, severe identity dislocation, and complex or rapid social change.¹⁶⁹ What makes nostalgia particularly applicable to the *pieds-noirs* is that it 'defines itself by its inability to approach its subject...There can be no nostalgia without the sense of

¹⁶⁶ Roger Colozzi, 'Mon Algérie', *L'Algérieniste*, 100 (December 2002), 84.

¹⁶⁷ Benjamin Stora, *Le livre, mémoire de l'Histoire: Réflexions sur le livre et la guerre d'Algérie*, (Paris, 2005), p.184; Josseline Revel-Mouroz, 'Le Centre d'études pied-noir (CEPN)' in *Marseille et le choc des décolonisations*, ed. by Jean-Jacques Jordi and Emile Temine, (Aix-en-Provence, 1996), pp.195-196.

¹⁶⁸ Jean Bevilacqua, 'Pax Gallica ou Pax Americana?', *PNM*, 77 (March 1997), 5.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Fritzsch, 'Spectres of History: On Nostalgia, Exile and Modernity', *American Historical Review*, 106 (December 2001), 1591. See also Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, (New York, 1979); Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (eds.), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, (Manchester; New York, 1989).

irreversibility'.¹⁷⁰ Nostalgia is frequently denounced due to its tendency 'not to confront the ghosts of history, but rather to establish a place where they may flourish forever', and thus to suppress the diversity of the past.¹⁷¹ Christopher Lasch regards the 'victim' of nostalgia as 'worse than a reactionary; he is an incurable sentimentalist. Afraid of the future, he is also afraid to face the truth about the past'.¹⁷² However others, notably Peter Fritzsche, have called for a more sophisticated reading of nostalgia that acknowledges its constructive potential alongside its paralysing elements.¹⁷³ Speaking with reference to the French Revolution, Fritzsche claims that 'this presence of absence is worth paying attention to' on the grounds that it has the 'effect of repeatedly scribbling up the clean slate of modern development and raising unbidden questions about the origins of social identity, the givenness (sic) of the here and now, and the possibility of contrary movements in the flow of history'.¹⁷⁴ With respect to the *pieds-noirs*, in 1962 they constituted an unwelcome visible reminder of a past most were anxious to forget. And this has remained the case, in large part because of the deliberate actions of the *pieds-noirs* themselves, particularly their refusal to suppress their cultural heritage in order to seamlessly assimilate. Defending and disseminating their own interpretations of the past represents a conscious effort not to allow others to write them out of history, or impose simplified, caricatural definitions upon them such as 'd'amiabes braillards prédateurs, se nourrissent de merguez et s'abreuvant d'ainsette'.¹⁷⁵ In this context nostalgia can be viewed as a consciously formulated counter-history that poses questions about the dominant public version.

However, it is important not to take this argument too far. Although the past articulated by these associations provides a valuable snapshot of French imperialism and of colonial mentalities, the inability of many *pied-noir* associations to acknowledge the existence of nuances, or to recognise the validity of alternative viewpoints indicates the limits of the constructive component in these accounts. As Stora has noted, there is a lack of self-awareness among certain *pieds-noirs* which, amongst other things, renders them incapable of appreciating, or at least admitting, that 'ils sont prenante du fait colonial, c'est à dire d'un système de privilèges dont ils bénéficient par rapport aux colonisés'.¹⁷⁶ Finally, the refusal of *pieds-noirs* to accept the validity of other perspectives means that rather than raising pertinent questions about certain elements of different discourses, what associations ultimately seek to do is replace these narratives wholesale with their own equally partial account.

¹⁷⁰ Fritzsche, 'Spectres of History', 1595.

¹⁷¹ Naomi Greene, 'Empire as Myth and Memory', in *Cinema, Colonialism and Post Colonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone World*, ed. by Dina Sherzer, (Austin TX, 1996), p.118.

¹⁷² Cited in David Lowenthal, 'Nostalgia Tells it Like it Wasn't', in *The Imagined Past*, p.20.

¹⁷³ Fritzsche, 'Spectres of History', p.1592.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p.1593.

¹⁷⁵ Joëlle Hureau, *La Mémoire des pieds-noirs de 1830 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2001), p.171.

¹⁷⁶ Stora, *Le livre*, p.183.

It is this element that makes it difficult to subscribe to the argument of *Mémoire d’Afrique du Nord* that *pied-noir* nostalgia is simply a benign form of reminiscing. ‘Pourquoi pas nous raconter quelque anecdote drôle, originale, quelque souvenir cocasse ou attendrissant qui nous feraient parcourir avec vous des chemins de mémoire’, the association’s journal asked.¹⁷⁷ The answer lies in the fact that what most associations offer are not harmless recollections, but a much more self-aware commemorative strategy based upon the reiteration, in multiple formats, of certain key propositions relating to the history of the *pieds-noirs* which make a particular point about the present-day identity of the community. As Éric Savarese argues, it is implausible to regard the *pied-noir* culture as the spontaneous development of ‘un corpus de symboles et d’emblèmes’ that served as a rallying point for ‘un million d’individus subissant l’épreuve du rapatriement’. Instead, unity is the product of a conscious ‘stratégie identitaire élaborée par des militants, au sein de structures associatives parfaitement identifiables’.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, in the same way that the *pied-noir* community is an artificial construct, forged on the basis of the common denominator of exile, so too is the history attached to the community by activists and associations. ‘In social practice’ writes Lucette Valensi, ‘each group chooses what it will remember and organises its own amnesia’ meaning that what is presented as ‘remembrance’ is really ‘re-creation in light of current circumstances and needs’.¹⁷⁹

It is thus not simply the case, as Hureau contends, that *pieds-noirs* ‘veulent seulement que leur existence soit reconnue’; what is really at stake is legitimacy.¹⁸⁰ Few are as militant and overt about their quest as Gérard Garcia of ANFANOMA who describes himself as ‘mû par la volonté de créer un nationalisme pied-noir, de conquérir une place dans la société française’.¹⁸¹ But the desire to establish a legitimate place within the national history is a clear association objective since with legitimacy comes the ability to take public pride in one’s past. This in turn creates more fertile ground in which to sow the seeds of transmission for subsequent generations because an acknowledged and accepted collective memory carries far greater cultural authority.¹⁸² It is therefore unremarkable that *pieds-noirs* have invented ideological myths to justify their present position and to validate their worldview, or that the

¹⁷⁷ ‘Supplément’, *Mémoire plurielle*, 9 (October 1996), 8

¹⁷⁸ Éric Savarese, *Algérie, la guerre des mémoires*, (Paris, 2007), pp. 109-110. For others who have made similar arguments see, Buono *Pieds-noirs*, p.60; Valérie Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés d’Afrique du Nord de 1956 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2007), p.329.

¹⁷⁹ Lucette Valensi, ‘From Sacred History to Historical Memory and Back’ in *Between Memory and History*, p.80. This is not to suggest that the memories invoked to support this version of events are themselves fictitious.

¹⁸⁰ Hureau, *La Mémoire*, p.83.

¹⁸¹ Cited in Michel-Chich, *Déracinés*, p.166.

¹⁸² W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ‘No Deed But Memory’, in *Where Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. by W Fitzhugh Brundage, (London, 2000), p.9.

past they offer is not intended as something to be critically interrogated.¹⁸³ In common with all memory carriers, *pied-noir* associations have filtered the past to produce a history that is ‘volontairement enjolivée’ and which ‘gomme les zones d’ombres’.¹⁸⁴ For Pierre Nora this represents ‘l’aspect symbolique d’une lutte pour le pouvoir, pour le monopole du passé et la reconquête devant la postérité de ce qui a été perdu dans la réalité’.¹⁸⁵ What gives this general impulse a particular edge is, as Daniel Leconte has highlighted, the fact that ‘pour les pieds-noirs qui ont tout perdu, l’Histoire c’est ce qui reste’.¹⁸⁶ The principal components of this collective interpretation of the past - harmony, entitlement, and innocence - will now be examined.

Multicultural Harmony

Different journals have particular favourite subjects. *L’Algérieniste*, for example, emphasises the *oeuvre civilisatrice* of France in Algeria, while *PNM* prefers to concentrate specifically on the Armée de l’Afrique, leaving *La lettre de Véritas* to focus in on the many failings of General de Gaulle. However, these all exist within the same over-arching argumentative framework. The great variety of topics inevitably covered by these publications, some of which, like ANFANOMA’s *France-Horizon*, have been in circulation for more than four decades, should not obscure the fact that at heart what they repeatedly address is a simple triumvirate of themes, albeit in a range of guises. While the format may change, the central messages do not. What is being offered is a self-enclosed system of historical logic that legitimates the present-day status of the *pieds-noirs* as innocent victims of an unjust decolonization and offers a strong, frequently re-iterated, and clear lexicon through which to defend this position.

One of the key elements of this historical schema is the image of a harmonious multi-ethnic colony in which ‘les pieds-noirs vivaient en bonne coopération avec les Arabes’.¹⁸⁷ Another commonly employed metaphor is Algeria as a ‘melting pot’; convenient shorthand for the formation of the cultural patrimony the *pieds-noirs* now defend.¹⁸⁸ The fraternity that characterised French Algeria is described by Anne Cazal as a ‘miracle’ through which ‘Des

¹⁸³ Philip Dine, *Images of the Algerian War: French Fiction and Film, 1954-1992*, (Oxford, 1994), p.150.

¹⁸⁴ Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.329.

¹⁸⁵ Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire*, vol. 2, (Paris, 1984), p.369.

¹⁸⁶ Daniel Leconte, *Les Pieds-Noirs: Histoire et portrait d’une communauté*, (Paris, 1980), p.303.

¹⁸⁷ Christian Gillet cited in Peter Batty, *La guerre d’Algérie*, (Paris, 1989), p.18. That they also lived in harmony with the Jewish population is rarely openly stated, but is instead simply taken for granted on the basis that the Jews, along with the *harkis*, form part of the same *rapatrié* community as the *pieds-noirs*.

¹⁸⁸ Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*, (Bloomington, 2006), p.2.

êtres différents, pourtant, dans leurs croyances comme dans leurs mentalités, se confondaient, se soudaient dans le même amour de leur pays, de leur soleil et de leur lointaine Mère-Patrie’.¹⁸⁹ The events of May 1958 when, irrespective of creed or colour, ‘par amour, l’Algérie toute entière est venue s’offrir à la France’, are deemed to offer further proof of this.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, when *Le Figaro* claimed that Algerian children were denied access to the schools of the Republic during the colonial period, the Cercle Algérieniste responded with three pages of photographs showing mixed classes from a range of towns and time periods in their journal to prove that both populations had equal access to education, complementing previous special themed issues devoted to the same subject (see Appendix C).

The presence of ‘inassimilable’ races that lived amicably side-by-side is the closest most *pièdes-noirs* come to conceding inequity, although, as Pierre Mannoni states defensively, ‘Le fait que des ethnies restent nettement individualisées n’autorise pas à conclure à un mutuel racisme’.¹⁹¹ Until recently, the most common approach to the issue of racism was to invoke the ‘bon Arabe’ that every *pièd-noir* knew. The implication is that this one, ‘notre Arabe’, was the exception to the ‘sale race’, though few associations put it as explicitly as Anne Loesch: ‘Chacun de nous a “son”, a “ses bons Arabes”, et ce sont ses amis, même s’il admet depuis toujours dans l’absolu que la race arabe est une “sale race”’.¹⁹² Attempting to justify this position, René Lenoir claimed that it is not a simple matter to judge relations between races and that to avoid over-simplified generalisations cases should be made person-to-person, rather than community-to-community, even though associations usually take the person-to-person example they have cited as indicative of relations throughout French Algeria.¹⁹³ It is also hard not to notice that ‘bons Arabes’ generally arise in the context of serving the *pièdes-noirs*: ‘le marchand de fromage, la voisine à qui on confie le bébé, le jardinier...’¹⁹⁴ Or, that the examples of harmonious community interaction usually revolve around the relatively superficial ‘charme d’échanges réciproques, en particulier les pâtisseries traditionnelles des jours des fêtes’.¹⁹⁵ Alongside these instances of specific contact with individual, familiar Algerians exists the necessary generic category of faceless and unknown ‘Arabes’. These function as the ultimate ‘Other’, providing a screen onto which to project all the stereotypical, negative characteristics of an indigenous race that the settlers needed to remain superior to in order to legitimate and thus maintain the hierarchical structure of the

¹⁸⁹ Anne Cazal, *Contes de ma Province sanglante*, (Hélette, 1997), p.162.

¹⁹⁰ *LV*, 3 (May 1996), front cover.

¹⁹¹ Pierre Mannoni, *Les Français d’Algérie: Vie, mœurs, mentalité de la conquête des territoires du Sud à l’indépendance*, (Paris, 1993), p.220.

¹⁹² Anne Loesch, *La valise et le cercueil*, (Paris, 1963), p.16.

¹⁹³ René Lenoir, *Mon Algérie tendre et violent*, (Paris, 1994), p.236.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p.87.

¹⁹⁵ Pierre Goinard cited in Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, p.149.

colony.¹⁹⁶ The ‘sale race’ thus exists in order to justify the inequalities of the colonial system, while the ‘bon Arabe’ exists in order to exculpate the *pieds-noirs* from charges of racism and of enjoying iniquitous privileges.¹⁹⁷

‘Du chaos à la lumière’

Relations between races and religions were good, so the *pieds-noirs* argue, because the Algerians recognised the hard work the settlers had put into establishing themselves and their families, as well as the great benefits that had followed their arrival for local communities. Deeply ingrained in association literature, the myth of pioneering ancestors challenges the *gros colon* stereotype by offering readers humble people fleeing poverty and persecution in search of a better future; people who arrived in Algeria with nothing and who, through hard work and tenacity, succeeded in establishing modest but happy lives. From this investment in the land and the sacrifices made – the death toll for the early settlers was extremely high due to the inhospitable terrain and diseases such as cholera – stems a strong sense of roots and entitlement. ‘Au fil des générations’, Jacques Roseau explained, ‘le sentiment de notre pérennité dans cette terre française s’est installé dans l’esprit et le cœur de tous les Français d’Algérie. Notre attachement à ce qui ne pouvait être que notre terre natale a été bien évidemment passionnel’.¹⁹⁸ A debt of gratitude is thus owed, and frequently acknowledged, to these ancestors who provided the community with a positive practical and moral heritage to take pride in. As Jean-François Gonzales defiantly stated: ‘Je n’ai pas du tout des regrets d’être pied-noir, pas du tout d’honte à voir des ancêtres qui ont mis ce pays en valeur, au contraire, j’ai une très grande fierté’.¹⁹⁹ This Whiggish history in which the settlers are credited with embarking upon an adventure which ‘ont fait passer l’ALGÉRIE du chaos à la lumière!’ is also reminiscent of late nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial literature which older *pieds-noirs* certainly would have been familiar with.²⁰⁰ Individual trajectories are thus amalgamated into a collective narrative of progress for the colony as a whole. This is then

¹⁹⁶ Emanuel Sivan claims that the composite ‘Arab’ is composed of five principal stereotypes: ‘he is savage [read backward], poor, dirty, dishonest and lascivious’. Sivan, Emanuel, ‘Colonialism and Popular Culture in Algeria’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14 (1979), 31.

¹⁹⁷ What is particularly interesting about this ostensible separation is how blurred the boundaries between the communities were in reality. Sivan, for example, has noted that the ignorance of Algerian spiritual customs displayed by the settlers was offset by their detailed, but ‘instrumentally motivated’ knowledge of indigenous material culture with which they would have had a quotidian interaction. This also is acknowledged by several *pieds-noirs*, including Georges Marin of Coup de Soleil who remarks that ‘de même, que les juifs du Maghreb étaient très imprégnés de culture arabe; les pieds-noirs, qu’ils veulent ou non, sont très marqués par la culture judéo-arabe’. Indeed, the specificity of the *pied-noir* community in France is to a large extent predicated on their impregnation with North African mores and customs. Sivan, ‘Colonialism and Popular Culture’, p.38; Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, p.240.

¹⁹⁸ Batty, *La guerre d’Algérie*, p.22.

¹⁹⁹ ‘Rapatriés: 25 ans de nostalgie’, *Camera 2*, aired 22 June 1987, (Channel 2).

²⁰⁰ ‘Dans les vitrines des libraires’, *L’Algérieniste*, 80 (March 2003), 18.

anchored within the broader, but equally positive, history of the French empire in which Algeria played an integral role.

That colonial Algeria was ‘une création totalement française’ is something all *pied-noir* associations agree on.²⁰¹ The lack of an innate sense of national identity on the part of the native inhabitants, due to centuries spent under foreign rule, is deemed to have rendered the country a blank canvas onto which the French could project their own values and systems of government. Within this narrative, the landing of French troops in 1830 serves as the foundational moment in the history of the country signalling the beginning of a radical transformation accomplished in co-operation with, rather than in opposition to, the wishes of the indigenous Algerians. As Stora has noted, comparison is also frequently made to the frontiersmen of the American West, in particular ‘le Texas’ on the basis of their shared historical experiences involving ‘Grandes espaces et hautes plaines, aventuriers européens fourbus et indigènes hostiles (mais soumis), charges héroïques de l’armée, et une société attachée à son glorieux passé rural, face à un Nord lointain et industriel...’²⁰² The details of the bloody conquest and lengthy pacification process are largely ignored and the soldiers who landed in 1830 cast instead as liberators who freed Algeria from the destructive tyranny and backwardness of the Sublime Porte. The nationalist rebellion that broke out 124 years later is thus denied legitimacy by the *pieds-noirs* who argue that Algeria had no identity separate from that of France and that the country the FLN were claiming as their own had in fact never existed. As Calmein boasted, ‘il ne s’agissait pas d’occuper un pays mais plutôt de fabriquer de toutes pièces’.²⁰³ To support this view *pied-noir* publications frequently cite Ferhat Abbas’ statement that ‘Je ne mourrai pas pour la patrie algérienne parce que cette patrie n’existe pas...’, conveniently ignoring important contextual details such as the date of this proclamation, 1936, the evolution of Abbas’ nationalist views and his subsequent militant trajectory.²⁰⁴

The establishment of Algeria as part of France’s empire is simply accepted as a historical fact, no discussion of the legitimacy of colonialism as a policy is ever undertaken. Instead, the French presence is justified with reference to the material benefits of their rule. From the moment they set foot on Algerian soil, the French vastly improved all aspects of life by building roads and railways, establishing extensive commercial enterprises such as vineyards, and providing services such as sanitation, health care, education, and democratic government (see Appendix D). Despite being greeted in 1830 with ‘un pays où régnait

²⁰¹ Bernard Coll during *Droit de réponse aux pieds-noirs*, aired 8 November 1986, (Channel 1).

²⁰² Stora, *Le livre*, p.190.

²⁰³ Maurice Calmein, *Dis, c’était comment, l’Algérie française? 20 questions et réponses à l’intention des jeunes Pieds Noirs*, (Friedberg; Bayern, 2002), p.14.

²⁰⁴ One journal also mistakenly dates this proclamation to 1956, although it is possible that this is a deliberate error designed to strengthen the point being made. ‘Tribune libre: Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa?’, *PNM*, 64 (January 1996), 6.

l'anarchie', the French left behind in 1962 'un pays moderne', an accomplishment that 'mérite plus qu'un simple "merci"'.²⁰⁵ When recalling the scale of these achievements articles often adopt a highly empirical perspective, as if veracity is somehow proportionate to the volume of statistics quoted. Thus in 'Quand l'Algérie était Française!' we learn that 'le cadeau' given to the FLN in 1962 was 'enormous', including 19,000 km of modern surfaced roads at a cost of 15.5 billion new francs, 4250 km of railways, and five major airports valued at 20 billion new francs.²⁰⁶ So numerous in fact were the contributions made by France that the list goes on for twelve pages and then carries on into the subsequent issue of *Aux échos d'Alger*. Algeria is therefore presented as an entirely French and a wholly positive creation. As the *Aux échos* author reflected:

En écrivant ces lignes, je pense à tous ceux qui, par leur travail, leur courage et leur acharnement, ont contribué à faire ce pays si beau, si riche et si prospère en son temps, croyaient avoir réussi à en faire un havre de paix puisque nous vivons cordialement avec toute la population sans distinction de race ni de religion.²⁰⁷

France thus restored Algeria to, and then enabled her to surpass, the greatness the land had achieved during the Roman era with proof of the beneficence of this act lying in the gratitude expressed to France by all her inhabitants. This gratitude is encapsulated by the Armée d'Afrique which, to *pieds-noirs*, represents:

[Le] symbole de courage, d'honneur, d'héroïsme et de fidélité...une expression magique qui force l'admiration et le respect non seulement pour les provinciaux que nous sommes mais aussi pour cette France que nous avons aimée, à laquelle nous étions fiers d'appartenir et que nous s'écrouler de jour en jour.²⁰⁸

The role of North African troops at places such as Monte Cassino in Italy, or in the Marseille landings during the Second World War, feature prominently in association publications where the idea of an 'engagement consenti et voulu' is continually stressed (see Appendix E).²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the 'indéniable' sacrifices made in order to protect the *mère patrie* place

²⁰⁵ 'L'Algérie de 1830 à 1962, Contribution au bilan français', *L'Algérieniste*, 80 (December 1997), 26.

²⁰⁶ R. Finkbender, 'Quand l'Algérie était Française', *EA*, 23 (September 1988), 3-15; 24. The similarities between such arguments and propaganda produced during the War of Independence are striking. This in combination with the echoes of the pioneering images of colonial literature found in association publications suggest that the *pieds-noirs* remain imbued with stereotypes and arguments propagated during the colonial period.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 4.

²⁰⁸ Maurice Calmein, 'Ile d'hommes et de valeurs', *L'Algérieniste*, 19 (September 1982), 3.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 3.

soldiers of all faiths within a heroic historical continuum that includes Bugeaud, Lamoricière, Lyautey and Maréchal Juin, facilitating the inscription of this past and its actors simultaneously in the history of both colony and *metropole*.²¹⁰

Overall, colonialism for the *pieds-noirs* constitutes ‘une belle aventure’ and ‘une page glorieuse de notre histoire que nous ne pouvons méconnaître’.²¹¹ Although this attitude is at odds with contemporary sensibilities, the valorisation of a now almost universally discredited form of rule makes sense when one considers it, as Esclangon-Morin does, as a strategy designed to prove the reality of the settler community and their culture.²¹² It also becomes comprehensible when viewed as an attempt by *pieds-noirs* to integrate their past with that of *la plus grande France*. It is as if they hope to revive and then transfer the glory of this bygone era onto themselves on the basis that they constitute the last surviving remnants of a project to which their ancestors contributed greatly. ‘Nous sommes les dinosaures d’une France éternelle, d’une grande France’ lamented one *pied-noir*.²¹³ In the innumerable articles underpinned by this objective the thrust is primarily defensive, founded on the perceived need to correct metropolitan misperceptions which have been shaped by a supposed leftist intellectual hegemony that calls on the French to ‘se tourmenter’ and ‘se culpabiliser’ with respect to the colonial past. Rather than buy into this apparently false ‘mauvaise conscience’, *pied-noir* associations are determined to dispel ignorance and give their descendants a vision of the past to be proud of. ‘Il faut mettre un terme à ce tissu de contre vérités qui s’étend comme un linceul sur notre glorieux passé’, Véritas told their readers, perpetuating the impulse to take control of the presentation of their own past evident from the earliest *pied-noir* memoirs and adding yet another *devoir de mémoire* to the ever-growing *pied-noir* list.²¹⁴

‘Le grand décolonisateur’

The toil of their ancestors, the peace and prosperity resulting from the French presence, and the sacrifices willingly made in the course of defending these two intimately intertwined lands all establish the right of the *pieds-noirs* to have been in Algeria and for Algeria to have been considered an inalienable part of France. That the settler community was then deprived of this right through no fault of their own forms a further central pillar in the *pied-noir* worldview. Interestingly, the FLN are not directly blamed for their exile in 1962; a position based on the corollary claim that Algeria was lost by France, rather than won by its own

²¹⁰ Yves Nas, ‘8 novembre 1942 - 8 novembre 1992 Cinquantenaire du débarquement allié en Afrique du Nord’, *L’Algérieniste*, 60 (December 1992), 3.

²¹¹ Emile Martin-Lakras, ‘Les chalances du soleil’, *Mémoire plurielle*, 16 (June 1998-October 1998), 18.

²¹² Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.344.

²¹³ Baussant, *Pieds-noirs*, p.416.

²¹⁴ Hattab Pacha, ‘Les gauchistes’, p.3.

people. *Pied-noir* journals consequently rarely recognise the FLN as combatants in their own right, preferring to paint them as simply a minority of savages subject to external pressures for whom violence was the natural recourse. This stance serves the dual purpose of highlighting the FLN's unsuitability to rule, as well as the unrepresentative nature of their rebellion, both of which legitimate the continuation of *Algérie française*, a concept the *pieds-noirs* believe the majority of Algerians remained committed to.

The principal villain in this *pied-noir*-orientated drama is therefore General de Gaulle since it was his introduction of the idea of 'autodétermination' and resultant plebiscites that are blamed for the end of French Algeria. All *pied-noir* resentments over the way the war was handled by the government in Paris are telescoped into de Gaulle. This hatred is given a particularly sharp edge by the *pied-noir* belief that they were largely responsible for bringing about de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 and did so on the understanding that he was as devoted to keeping Algeria French as they were:

Pour nous, c'était l'espoir. On avait l'impression que militairement nous avions déjà gagné mais que, politiquement eut, il fallait gagner la seconde bataille. On avait l'impression qu'avec de Gaulle on allait gagner la bataille politique.²¹⁵

The sense of betrayal when this turned out not to be the case is palpable and remains an extremely raw nerve within the community. Arguments relating to the inevitable tide of history, or of colonies as an increasing impediment to the modernisation of France cut no ice with the *pieds-noirs* who see in de Gaulle only 'une politique d'abandon' that is particularly treacherous given the hopes aroused by 13 May 1958. In attempting to comprehend the jump from 'vive l'Algérie française' in Mostaganem in June 1958, to self-determination as the solution that 'conforme au bon sens et à la justice' in January 1961, the only reasons the *pieds-noirs* can find are selfish ones pertaining to de Gaulle's insatiable desire for prestige: 'il avait décidé, par orgueil et ambition personnelle de détruire et d'assassiner, en sacrifiant des milliers d'êtres humains, ce plus beau fleuron du patrimoine français: l'Algérie'.²¹⁶ Over a century of collective hard work was thus sacrificed in a single sentence uttered by one man, as 'le maître de l'Élysée n'avait pas hésité à en confier le délicate alchimie à une phalange d'apprentis sorciers aussi incompetents qu'irréductiblement affouillés'.²¹⁷ The simplicity of this reading of the past is made possible by the counterpart wholly positive presentation of colonisation and of life in French Algeria. The refusal to engage with the complexities of the first part of the narrative removes the need to do so with respect to the second. Decolonisation

²¹⁵ Christian Gillet cited in Batty, *La guerre*, p.74.

²¹⁶ Joseph Hattab Pacha, 'Le mot du Président', *LV*, 8 (December 1996), 2.

²¹⁷ Georges Bosc, 'Le sang d'un poète', *L'Algérieniste*, 41 (March 1988), i.

thus becomes simply the product of the egoistical whim of an individual, rather than an intricate process with multiple loci and degrees of responsibility. This exonerates the *pieds-noirs* from accountability for their fate since they appear as pawns in a larger political game over which they had no control.

‘Fidélité à la parole donnée’

Given his behaviour during the Algerian War, the *pied-noir* community object vehemently to the accolades still accorded to de Gaulle for his role during the Second World War, pointing out that ‘Jamais la personnalité de Staline, de Mussolini ou du Grande Mogul n’a été l’objet d’un tel culte’.²¹⁸ Yet while denigrating de Gaulle’s actions in 1940, associations simultaneously seek to use the principle he established of legitimate opposition to a government no longer acting in the best interests of the nation to justify illegal actions committed in the name of the *Algérie française* cause, particularly the Generals’ putsch of April 1961, the Petit Clamart assassination attempt, and the terrorism of the OAS (see Appendix F). ‘De Gaulle, condamné à mort par coutume pour trahison, attaque contre la sûreté de l’État et désertion à l’étranger en temps de guerre’ wrote putsch general Edmond Jouhaud, ‘Notre action, de même, en avril 1961, était peut être illégal mais légitime à nos yeux’.²¹⁹ According to this system of logic, the putsch was an understandable response to the betrayal of ‘autodétermination’, while the failure of April 1961 is then used to justify the establishment of the OAS as ‘le dernier espoir des Français d’Algérie, fils des pionniers qui avait créé l’Algérie et fait sa richesse’, all of which de Gaulle had jeopardised.²²⁰ The extreme nature of the OAS is downplayed, with one *pied-noir* describing the group as composed of ‘les gens comme vous, comme nous, comme moi’.²²¹ There is almost never any mention of the attacks they conducted against civilians in Algeria and France, while accusations that it was precisely the OAS’s scorched earth policy that made the continued presence of the settlers in Algeria untenable are always vehemently refuted. Instead, the OAS is presented as a popular movement which ‘réunissait toutes les ethnies et toutes les courants politiques dans un seul but: sauver l’Algérie française’.²²²

Composed entirely of patriots, the OAS, particularly those activists who were members of the French forces, understood the importance of ‘fidélité à la parole donnée’, unlike de Gaulle. Alongside ‘fidelity’, ‘honour’ and ‘duty’ feature regularly in conjunction with the putsch and the OAS. ‘Nous nous sommes donc rendus sans regrets’, wrote putsch

²¹⁸ André Figueras, ‘Le Général est-il un Dieu?’, *PNM*, 95 (November 1998), 20.

²¹⁹ Cited in ‘Les quatre généraux les plus décorés de France’, *LV*, 2 (April 1996), 1.

²²⁰ Calmein, *Dis, c’était comment*, p.17.

²²¹ ‘Les années mélancholiques’, aired 7 April 2007.

²²² ‘Les faussaires de l’histoire’, *LV*, 22 (April 1998), 5.

participant Jean Florentin. 'Nous avons fait ce que nous estimions être notre devoir jusqu'au bout'.²²³ However, the most frequent allusions are to the Résistance and to the OAS as its heir. In February 1997 Véritas ran a front cover depicting prominent OAS militants alongside the caption 'Non, ces hommes ne sont pas des égorgeurs, mais des Résistants et de vrais patriotes'.²²⁴ One of the most prominent poster boys for this argument is Jean-Marie Bastien Thiry who was put to death by firing squad for his role in the Petit Clamart assassination attempt. The stoicism of this young, handsome, and devoted father during both his trial and execution earned him the veneration of the *pied-noir* community which they express through glowing biographies with titles such as 'Bastien Thiry s'est sacrifié pour la France' and even on a *stèle*, paid for by Cercle Algérieniste members, that bears the inscription 'Fusillés pour avoir défendu l'Algérie française. N'oubliez jamais leur sacrifice'.²²⁵ 'Nous voulons associer à ce combat', eulogised Colonel Bernard Moinet, 'celui de ses vaillants compagnons dont les noms furent évoqués il y a quelques instants, et qui ont tout sacrifié pour sauver la Patrie en danger'.²²⁶ The actions of the pro-*Algérie française* lobby are deliberately not represented as extreme responses to unique circumstances, but rather as the continuation of long established political and moral traditions whose legitimacy is firmly established. As this and the other examples cited demonstrate, the historical tenets promoted by *pied-noir* associations function collectively to define an irreproachable identity for the community. Associations then seek to inscribe that identity and the behaviour it engendered within recognisable and respected national trajectories such as the French Empire and the Resistance in the hope that the attributes attached to these glorious epochs will also be conferred upon the present-day *pieds-noirs* and upon their descendants in the future.

The War of Independence

The concentration on the pre-1954 era, 'ceux de l'Algérie heureux', serves to heighten the tragedy of what the *pieds-noirs* regard as the ignominious end suffered by French Algeria, while simultaneously deflecting attention away from the specific context, causes and course of French decolonisation.²²⁷ However, the 'dark years' of the War of Independence is not a subject that *pied-noir* associations avoid entirely. Instead, because *pieds-noirs* generally turn

²²³ Jean Florentin, 'Avril 1961...Fin de l'Armée d'Afrique', *L'Algérieniste*, 79 (September 1997), 74.

²²⁴ *LV*, 10 (February 1997), front cover.

²²⁵ Bernard Moinet, 'Bastien Thiry s'est sacrifié pour la France', *PNM*, 55 (March 1995), 25. It is, however, notable that the Mayor of Béziers, where the monument is located, refused to give a speech at the inauguration ceremony on the grounds that it was not an official event. His reluctance may also be related to the fact that not all see Bastien Thiry in the same light as the Cercle Algérieniste.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* 25.

²²⁷ Joëlle Hureau, 'Associations et souvenir chez les français rapatriés d'Algérie', in *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Rioux, (Paris, 1990), p.525. This observation is also made in Buono, *Pieds-noirs*, p.75.

to the past to legitimate their sense of themselves as victims of a historical injustice rather than to explain what actually happened, the conflict is re-conceptualised to produce an account that rests heavily on the events that had the greatest impact upon the settler community, rather than necessarily the most significant moments of the war. November 1954 to March 1962 are largely skimmed over, although exceptions are made for particularly brutal FLN operations such as the 1955 Philippeville or El Halia mine massacres. Instead, attention is overwhelmingly concentrated upon the post-ceasefire period which encompasses the most traumatic moments of the war for the *pieds-noirs*, including events on the rue d'Isly and in Oran, the fate of the *harkis* and, of course, the exodus itself.

'Non au 19 mars'

Interestingly, although the signing of the Evian Accords on 19 March 1962 serves as the watershed point in the *pied-noir* chronology of the war, it is a date that the present day community would prefer to see erased rather than remembered. Their principal objection is that the ceasefire did not end the war. In fact, if anything, it signified an intensification of the violence, with associations claiming more Europeans, and certainly more *harkis*, were killed after this date than in all previous years of fighting:

Les accords d'Evian n'ont pas marqué le cessez-le-feu en Algérie, mais l'abandon de quinze départements français et des populations qui les habitaient, à une force minoritaire, subversive et terroriste dont les seuls consignes étaient celles d'une tuerie permanente.²²⁸

In light of the casualties, commonly put at 150,000 *harkis* and 10,000 *pieds-noirs*, 'celebrating' 19 March is deemed tantamount to commemorating a defeat like Sedan or the Armistice, something that 'entraîne le mépris et l'oubli des victimes civiles innocents assassinés'.²²⁹ In 1998, determined to prevent this, ANFANOMA, RECOURS and the Cercle Algérieniste, the three associations with 'la plus forte implantation', adopted a 'common front' on the issue. The group met with the Ministre des Anciens Combattants to collectively denounce 'le caractère inacceptable et insultant' of commemorations being held on that day.²³⁰ Behind this particular demonstration lies a long-established tradition of consensus on this issue within the *pied-noir* community whereby petitions are regularly circulated and the

²²⁸ LV, 1 (March 1996), Insert.

²²⁹ '19 mars 1962 et 35e anniversaire', *PNM*, 84 (November 1997), 14.

²³⁰ Thierry Rolando, '19 mars, le combat continue', *L'Algérieniste*, 83 (September 1998), 130.

more activist elements are prepared to take to the streets to publicise their cause.²³¹ Over the course of a televised live outdoor debate to mark the twentieth anniversary of the cessation of hostilities for example, a large crowd gathered holding aloft banners and verbally denouncing the ‘shame’ of 19 March, their vehemence causing the host to threaten to terminate the transmission at one point.²³² Similar slogans were again on display in 2002 when a *contre manifestation* was held in Marseille to protest over official commemorative services being held in Paris, including the unveiling of a plaque by Mayor Bertrand Delanoë in Père Lachaise to the dead and missing in North Africa between 1952 and 1962.²³³

As with many *pied-noir* crusades, this issue is formulated as a war to be waged against the forces of falsehood and oblivion. While activity generally peaks during major anniversary years, the momentum of the ‘non au 19 mars’ cause has accelerated noticeably since 2000 because of a series of governmental discussions regarding the assignation of an official date of remembrance for the War of Independence. The activities of the Fédération nationale des anciens combattants en Algérie (FNACA), who advocate 19 March as the most appropriate date for a national commemoration, have particularly enraged the *pied-noir* community, especially following the group’s success baptising 2633 streets across France with the name 19 mars.²³⁴ When one Mayor opted to replace the rue Bachaga Boualam with the rue 19 mars, the reaction of Véritas was swift and unequivocal:

N’en déplaise à ces beaux messieurs de la FNACA qui ont trouvé, dans cette date, un titre de gloire, c’est bien la honte du pays qui s’affiche, ainsi, sans aucune pudeur, sur les murs des rues des villes et villages de notre douce France, terre d’asile, s’il en fut et pays des droits de l’homme. LE SANG DE TOUS CES MORTS DE L’APRÈS 19 MARS 1962 SUITE, ENCORE, SUR LES MURS DE LA HONTE.²³⁵

In 2001, a date with deliberately no special war-related meaning, 5 December, was chosen as France’s official day of commemoration.²³⁶ The ‘non au 19 mars’ campaigns have continued

²³¹ For example, ‘Pétition: Non à la commémoration de la fin de la guerre d’Algérie le 19 mars’, *EA*, 57 (June 1997), 6.

²³² *Montpellier: 20 ans accords d’Evian*, aired 19 March 1982 (Channel 2).

²³³ ‘Manifestation pieds-noirs’, *Édition nationale*, aired 19 March 2002 (Fr3); ‘Manifestation de pieds-noirs à Paris’, *TF1 20 heures*, aired 19 March 2002 (TF1).

²³⁴ ‘Douze arguments contre la commémoration du 19 mars 1962’, *PNM*, 88 (March 1998), 20.

²³⁵ While Véritas opted for the moral high ground, other associations prefer to undermine FNACA’s legitimacy on the basis that its 338,303 members in 1997 represented only 19.35% of North Africa veterans. ‘Les murs de la honte français’, *LV*, 1 (March 1996), 2; ‘Douze arguments’, 21.

²³⁶ For a flavour of the debates surrounding this issue see: www.senat.fr/questions/base/2001/qSEQ011035405.html [27 December 2008] ANFANOMA also produced a list of how deputies had voted on the issue captioned ‘Ils ont voté pour le 19 mars, ils doivent être sanctionnés. Ils ont voté contre, ils ont fait leur devoir’, *FH*, 428-9 (January-February 2002), 12.

however, reflecting the determination of *pied-noir* associations to prevent any positive significance being attributed to this date; a strategy indicative of their wider commitment to inscribing their version of the past into the public narrative of the war and to prevent different interpretations from gaining authority.

26 March and 5 July 1962: ‘des victimes civiles innocents abattus tragiquement’

Crucial to the *pieds-noirs* refusal to accept the conventional periodisation of the War of Independence are 26 March 1962, when French troops fired on a crowd of *pied-noir* demonstrators on the rue d’Isly in Algiers, and 5 July 1962, when several Europeans were killed in Oran after violence broke out amidst independence celebrations. Although there were also Algerian casualties, what makes this date particularly notable for the *pieds-noirs* was the fact that the remaining French troops garrisoned in Oran, under the command of General Joseph Katz and obeying orders from Paris, did not intervene to protect the settlers. The centrality of these two ‘massacres’ to the *pied-noir* lexicon is indicated by the scale and regularity with which they are covered by associations, many of whom also hold annual gatherings on one or both of these dates.²³⁷ This has furthermore been the case from the early 1960s onwards with *L’écho d’Oran* running a lengthy piece in 1965, one year into its existence, detailing how on 5 July 1962 ‘les Musulmans déferlant sur la ville européenne ont enlevé et massacré hommes, femmes et enfants’.²³⁸ Commemoration of the two dates tends to be framed with reference to other *pied-noir* tragedies in order to stress the cumulative sorrows borne by the community. March, which alongside the rue d’Isly also witnessed the execution of Jean-Marie Bastien-Thiry and the signing of the Evian Accords, is therefore often referred to as the ‘mois de tous les malheurs’.²³⁹

One of the main premises tying 26 March and 5 July together is that they are perceived as events that definitively set the *pied-noir* community apart, representing ‘la rupture totale’ with both Algeria and France.²⁴⁰ Nicole Ferrandis, president of the association Familles des victimes du 26 mars 1962 compares the rue d’Isly to Bloody Sunday in Ireland because both involved ‘des victimes civiles innocentes abbattues tragiquement’. However, whereas in Ireland it was a case of ‘de heurts entre forces de l’ordre anglaises et manifestants

²³⁷ This coverage tends to take the form of detailed eyewitness accounts, often reproduced from pre-published memoirs. With respect to 26 March, two particularly popular works are Marie-Jeanne Rey’s *Mémoires d’une écorchée vive*, and Francine Dessaigne’s *Journal d’une mère de famille pied noir*. Indeed the two went on to co-author a volume that combined first hand accounts with archival research in a self-proclaimed bid to unravel the truth about the events of that day. See *Un crime sans assassins: Alger 26 mars 1962*, (Perros-Guirec, 1994).

²³⁸ Paule Mathieu, ‘5 juillet 1962. Le massacre des innocents’, *EO*, 12 (July 1965), 4.

²³⁹ ‘Mars, mois de tous les malheurs’, *L’Algérieniste*, 72 (March 2001), 5; Jean-Marc Lopez, ‘Mars...comme Mémoire’, *PNM*, 44 (March 1994), 5

²⁴⁰ ‘Rapatriés: 25 ans de nostalgie’, *Camera 2*, aired 22 June 1987 (Channel 2).

séparatistes’, in Algeria the Europeans were ‘victimes des forces censées les protéger, les défendre’.²⁴¹ Framed as ‘le précieux symbole d’une conscience dressée contre le cour de l’Histoire’, the two events are used by associations to unify the *pieds-noirs* by affirming their distinctiveness. This sense of isolation is reinforced by the feeling that the rue d’Isly and Oran have both fallen victim to ‘la conspiration du silence’ orchestrated on behalf of a deliberately falsified official history.²⁴² In the face of such silence, it becomes imperative to make the truth about both events known. As Georges Bosc stressed to members of the Cercle Algérieniste:

Aujourd’hui, trente ans après le drame tu, en mémoire des deux mille martyrs, mes frères, immolés à Oran le 5 juillet 1962 et offerts en holocauste à la déesse Indépendance, je confie ma déposition en toute conscience du Tribunal de la Vérité, afin que lumière et justice soient faites...²⁴³

Ever present is the idea of a duty incumbent upon the state to acknowledge its culpability and to apologise for these tragedies, which some go so far as to classify as crimes against humanity.²⁴⁴

As with other key moments in their history, deconstructing the narratives offered by the *pied-noir* community about these two dates reveals a basic formula consistently applied. Illustrative of this process is the fact that the general starting point for accounts of the rue d’Isly and Oran is the tranquillity and fraternity that previously characterised the two locations. Oran is depicted as possessing the harmonious mix of ‘cinq peuplements, trois religions, une patrie’, while on the morning of 26 March 1962 the inhabitants of Algiers are blissfully unaware of the fate that awaits them: ‘Alger: blanc, bleu, soleil...ce matin-là certains des Algérois qui ouvraient leur fenêtre sur la beauté du monde, pouvaient-ils se douter qu’ils vivaient leur dernier matin?’²⁴⁵ The fact that a ceasefire had been concluded only days earlier following eight years of brutal warfare is strangely absent. Decontextualising these events serves to heighten the impact of the violence, making it seem anomalous, rather than placing it within a continuum of escalating conflict between 1954 and 1962. A similarly stark juxtaposition exists between victims and aggressors with each side clearly delineated. Consequently, when it comes to explaining the origins of the rue d’Isly demonstrations

²⁴¹ ANFANOMA questionnaire response. Nicole Ferrandis is also ANFANOMA’s vice-president.

²⁴² Michel Gamba, ‘Lettre ouverte à Monsieur le Président de la République’, *L’Algérieniste*, 49 (March 1990), 5. While it is true that official recognition and compensation have not been forthcoming and that the episode is less well known than, say, the Battle of Algiers, both events do feature in the majority of serious academic treatments of the war.

²⁴³ Georges Bosc, ‘Enfer et Rédemption’, *L’Algérieniste*, 58 (June 1992), 3

²⁴⁴ The invocation of this loaded terminology is also present in the publications and campaigns of certain *harki* organisations, something that will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

²⁴⁵ Bosc, ‘Enfer’, 3; Marie Elbe, ‘Ce dimanche-là!’, *L’Algérieniste*, 93 (March 2001), 2.

associations are in agreement that ‘Les Algérois vont soutenir leurs frères de Bab-el-Oued’, who for the past three days had been ‘prisonniers d’une armée française plus que menaçante’.²⁴⁶ Within this mutually affirming discourse the Europeans of Algiers are confirmed as innocent victims, while the reasons behind the French military blockade remain ill defined. That the *quartier* had been cordoned off in an attempt to break the power of the OAS and the cycle of violence they had unleashed on the town since the Evian Accords is usually omitted. The few articles that do refer to the OAS generally echo *PNM*’s interpretation in which searching for OAS commandos was simply a pretext the French army used to terrorise and render prostrate the Bab-el-Oued residents.²⁴⁷ Removing the OAS from the equation simultaneously removes any shades of grey, leaving a clear line between innocent and guilty. A similar black and white blame game is conducted with the events in Oran where General Katz, by obeying orders to keep his men in their barracks during the riots, is conveniently placed to act as the villain of the piece. Following the publication of his memoirs, Katz was subjected to a particularly scathing *PNM* editorial which read: ‘Le Général Katz réapparaît tel Dracula assoiffé du sang de nos martyrs... Comme cet individu n’a pas la décence de se taire et de mourir oubliée de tous, nous devons réagir’.²⁴⁸ Blame is further removed from the *pied-noir* community via the oft-quoted assertion that the rue d’Isly and Oran were premeditated by the ultimate source of all *pied-noir* suffering, General de Gaulle. Algiers inhabitant Roger Braiser thus recalls how he was telephoned on the morning of 26 March 1962 by one of his former pupils, a Muslim, who warned him: ‘M’sieur, faites gaffe! De Gaulle a donné des ordres. Il lui faut 400 morts dans les rues d’Alger d’ici ce soir’. What comes to pass that day leads Braiser to conclude ‘Ainsi, comme à Oran, il n’y eut pas de fatalité mais un complot organisé pour assassiner des innocents’.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, evoking de Gaulle as Goliath to their David sets the rue d’Isly and Oran up as battles between powerless but righteous individuals and an unscrupulous bully with an unfair advantage.

As with any bloody historical event, establishing the death toll tends to take centre stage. The search for the elusive definitive statistic is one that all *pied-noir* associations and their journals embark upon, producing a range of figures for Isly and Oran, usually rounded up to the nearest hundred.²⁵⁰ These numbers are frequently combined with gore-laden

²⁴⁶ ‘La tragédie du 26 mars 1962. La rue d’Isly’, *PNM*, 13 (March 1991), 26; ‘Le 26 mars 1962...le 26 mars 1982’, *EA*, 2 (May 1982), 3.

²⁴⁷ Claude Rochette, ‘Les Champs-Élysées et Notre Dame pour le 26 mars’, *PNM*, 117 (February 2001), 18.

²⁴⁸ ‘Faut-il un nouveau miracle à Santa Cruz?’, *PNM*, 79 (May 1997), 5. See also Joseph Katz, *L’Honneur d’un Général: Oran, 1962*, (Paris, 1993); *Une destinée unique: mémoires 1907-1996*, (Paris, 1997).

²⁴⁹ Roger Braiser, ‘Le 26 mars 1962’, *EO*, 219 (March-April 1992), 19.

²⁵⁰ Véritas for example claimed 82 had been killed and 200 wounded. Another common statistic is the amalgamated figure of 2000, dead and wounded, for the two dates. Anne Cazal, ‘Imprescriptible!’, *LV*, 11 (March 1997), 3.

accounts of how those people died and illustrated with photographs (see Appendix G). For Henri Martinez, writing in *L'Algérieniste*, the sights he witnessed in Oran still produce nightmares almost four decades later:

La famille exécutée sur place, la vieille décapitée à la hache sur le coin d'un trottoir, ces garçons encore adolescents, presque coupés en deux par l'acharnement d'une mitrailleuse, cette jeune femme qui mourra mille morts en seulement quelques jours de faux sursis; cet homme dont les mains longtemps après la mort tentaient encore d'endiquer le flot affreux jaillissant de sa gorge tranchée.²⁵¹

'À sa place,' Anne Cazal concluded with respect to the French soldiers who fired, 'je me serais suicidée de honte'.²⁵² Cazal's moralising comes easily because for her, as for the majority of *pied-noir* spokespeople, there are only two sides: good and evil, right and wrong. This is history without context or nuance in which the characters are two-dimensional. It is also history prone to stark generalisations and exaggerations expressed through inflated and inflammatory language, as indicated by titles such as: 'Alger 26 mars rue d'Isly: le sang, les larmes, l'horreur', 'Oran...5 juillet 1962: le génocide', and 'Katz, l'Heydrich d'Oran'.²⁵³ In the hands of *pied-noir* associations the rue d'Isly and Oran are reduced to unprovoked tragedies that have been subsequently covered up. This places a burden of truth upon those who lived through the events and thus can authentically recount what really happened, particularly given the paucity of archival material relating to these events.²⁵⁴ This was the inspiration behind Geneviève de Ternant's three-volume *L'agonie d'Oran* which sought 'crier à la face du monde ce que l'on a voulu cacher, oublier, nier'.²⁵⁵

'Le drapeau identitaire'

What this chapter has sought to demonstrate is the existence and content of a *pied-noir* lexicon that is expressed primarily through associations. This is the principal commemorative shift between the immediate post-war era when associations were preoccupied with material concerns, leaving history to be conveyed predominantly through individual testimonies and memoirs, and the mid-1970s when culturally and commemoratively orientated associations gained ascendancy. With the emergence of such associations came the centralisation and

²⁵¹ Henri Martinez, 'Oran. Requiem pour un apocalypse', *L'Algérieniste*, 86 (June 1999), 3.

²⁵² Cazal, 'Imprescriptible!', 3.

²⁵³ *PNM*, 13 (March 1991), front cover; *EA*, 89 (June 2005), front cover; *PNM*, 48 (July-August 1994), 16-17.

²⁵⁴ For a more detailed discussion of the archives relating to Oran see Fouad Soufi, 'L'histoire face à la mémoire: Oran, le 5 juillet 1962', in *La guerre d'Algérie dans la mémoire et l'imaginaire*, p.134.

²⁵⁵ Geneviève de Ternant, *L'agonie d'Oran 5 juillet 1962*, (3 vols; Calvisson, 1991-2000).

codification of a selective past designed to serve present needs. Consequently, a situation has arisen whereby ‘tout rapatrié, s’il adhère et se sent appartenir à la communauté pied-noir, porte en lui cette “mémoire” qu’il assume et défend, persuadé qu’il s’agit là du drapeau identitaire transmis depuis des générations d’ancêtres’.²⁵⁶ The purpose of these foundational myths is to create a contemporary communal identity that recognises the duality of the *pieds-noirs* as ‘un peuple en construction sur le sol africain’, but who are also an integral part of France’s history and that ultimately tries to ‘renouer les fils distendus entre les deux histoires’.²⁵⁷

While the *pied-noir* lexicon may be presented in a variety of guises, its fundamental elements are immutable. The great strength of this codified history is that its essential components are sufficiently malleable to be articulated in almost any context. These representations are not about novelty, nuance, or interrogating the past since *pied-noir* associations are not offering history for history’s sake. Instead they are capitalising on the opportunity to reiterate a familiar and accepted vision within a safe space where a favourable reception is guaranteed by a community of like-minded individuals who have all internalised the same precepts. Over time this has created a clearly defined and strongly adhered to patrimony that allows *pieds-noirs* to distinguish themselves positively from the metropolitan French who now surround them, as well as offering a sense of familiarity which compensates for the painful sense of being *déraciné*.

In spite of claims that the state and official history have forgotten the *pieds-noirs* placing the *devoir de mémoire* entirely upon their shoulders, the initial silence surrounding the years 1954 to 1962 and France’s reluctance to discuss its colonial past actually benefited associations. The fact that no one apart from the *pieds-noirs* was openly discussing these issues meant that there were few dissenting voices that associations needed to deal with. The way was essentially left clear for the *rapatrié* community to construct its own internally directed version of events. By the time contradictory interpretations and competition from other memory carriers began to emerge on a significant scale in the 1990s, the *pied-noir* lexicon was firmly established and its deployment so well rehearsed that it was able to withstand these challenges. This is partly why there has been virtually no evolution in terms of content; having successfully developed a ‘croyance indéfectible’, there was no need.²⁵⁸ In fact, many associations regard the static nature of their history as proof of its veracity. It may also be the case that the *pieds-noirs* have not altered their interpretations because they see no change in the way they are perceived by their metropolitan cousins. They have carried on

²⁵⁶ Bueno, *Pieds-noirs*, p.100.

²⁵⁷ Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.315.

²⁵⁸ Bueno, *Pieds-noirs*, p.71.

fighting the same battles because victory, in the form of outright acceptance of their perspective, remains elusive.

The Social and Physical Dimensions of Memory

Consommant des souvenirs

So far the focus has been primarily on printed expressions of the *pied-noir* 'metamemory'. However, as Hureau reminds us '[l]a nostalgie ne se réduit pas aux textes et images figés sur le papier, elle est aussi terre conviviale'.²⁵⁹ Hureau's conception of memory as a form of social space is shared by *pied-noir* associations who gather regularly to commemorate a set canon of religious, patriotic, and war-related dates including Ascension, 8 May, 11 November and 26 March. 'Il faut enfin apprendre à nous retrouver fraternellement unis, pour les dates anniversaires qui nous tiennent à coeur et généraliser le calendrier "Algérie française" dans toute la France' explained the Cercle Algérieniste.²⁶⁰ Building on the notion that 'chacun d'entre nous est un peu la racine des autres', this *Algérie française* calendar enables the *pied-noir* community to maintain its coherence in the present by affording individuals a stable set of occasions to 'retrouver ses racines et d'affirmer son existence' within a collective framework; what Andrea Smith terms the opportunity to 'reweave a social fabric'.²⁶¹ The absence of physical *lieux de mémoire* only heightens the poignancy of the places at which the *pieds-noirs* gather. 'Dès les lendemains du rapatriement' Buono observes, l'espace géographique des pieds-noirs se transforme en une construction mentale autour de laquelle vont s'agréger une à une les pièces d'une culture artificielle'.²⁶² These 'lieux artificiels', as well as the actual act of gathering together, can therefore be regarded as attempts to re-create the essence of *la terre perdue*.²⁶³ Cercle Algérieniste founder Maurice Calmein is worth quoting at length on this point:

Quelle que soit l'origine du rassemblement, on retrouve partout la même atmosphère où la joie des retrouvailles se mêle aux larmes des souvenirs douloureux et où domine le plaisir d'être ensemble... Plongeons furtif dans un passé heureux soudain présent, loin de l'incompréhension métropolitain, bien au chaud, au coeur de la tribu,

²⁵⁹ Hureau, *La mémoire*, p.87.

²⁶⁰ 'Congrès national', *L'Algérieniste*, 1 (15 December 1977), 8.

²⁶¹ 'Editorial', *EO*, 190 (May-June 1987), 6; Smith, *Colonial Memory*, p.188.

²⁶² Buono, *Pieds-noirs*, p.60.

²⁶³ Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris, 2005), p.17.

plaisir éphémère mais ô combien intense, faisant oublier d'un seul coups les problèmes matériels, la dispersion des familles et l'angoisse du recommencement.²⁶⁴

Rassemblements therefore represent a way to reaffirm the existence and vitality of the *pied-noir* community, renewing the faith of adherents in themselves and their collective identity.

Every Ascension Day since 1966, for example, *pieds-noirs* have flocked to the purpose-built cathedral of Notre Dame de Santa Cruz in Mas-de-Mingue, Nîmes that now houses the famous statue of the Virgin Mary which, legend has it, saved the people of Oran from cholera in 1849. Attracting around 10,000 people in the 1960s, crowds peaked at over 100,000 in the 1980s. Although attendance is much lower today, Nîmes has retained its crown as the best-attended *pied-noir* event.²⁶⁵ Providing the opportunity to 'mêler culture et convivialité', this form of memorial activity is naturally heightened in significant anniversary years; 1987, 1992, and 1997 were thus marked by national *rassemblements* in Nice, Paris, and Marseille respectively. Nice and its successors offered the familiar opportunity to reunite with old friends, to share memories and to indulge in bittersweet reminiscences but on an unprecedented scale; an estimated 300,000 *pieds-noirs* descended on Nice between 25 and 28 June 1987.²⁶⁶ It was, as Roseau explained, a case of 'Toutes confessions réunis, confondus et c'est une immense histoire d'amour...qui était baigné de larmes, de soleil, de sang, mais démontrable éclat de rire...'²⁶⁷

For associations, these gatherings offered an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate the numerical strength, cohesion, and vitality of the *pied-noir* population to the wider world by providing a forum in which to 'se proclamer sa culture et la fierté de sa couleur'.²⁶⁸ The Cercle Algérieniste stall at Nice was thus deemed a success on the basis that through 'l'évidence, par preuves et arguments', they had exposed 'une Algérie méconnue et une France oubliée', something that 'pour beaucoup de nos visiteurs, fut une révélation'.²⁶⁹ More broadly, the unprecedented size of the Nice gathering, its coincidence with the new indemnification law and the quarter century anniversary, plus the range of official figures in attendance, including Chirac, created a significant media frenzy. Many local newspapers ran front-page pieces, while most national television channels featured the *rassemblement* in their news programmes. Coverage was generally positive with the emphasis placed upon the *pieds-noirs*' integration and economic success, as well as their status as an established and accepted

²⁶⁴ Cited in Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, p.126.

²⁶⁵ Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.17.

²⁶⁶ Rosemary Averell Manes, *The Pieds-Noirs 1960-2000: A Case Study in the Persistence of Subcultural Distinctiveness*, (Bethesda, MD, 2005), p.119.

²⁶⁷ 'Plateau', aired 27 June 1987.

²⁶⁸ 'Rapatriés', aired 22 June 1987.

²⁶⁹ Jo Sohet, 'Avec vous: Vingt-cinq ans...et trios mois après', *L'Algérieniste*, 39 (September 1987), iv.

regional minority. The timing of this demonstration of the vibrancy of the cultural side of the *pied-noir* identity was highly significant, coming at a point when the satisfaction of the community's material demands through the impending indemnification law threatened to sweep them from the public's gaze.²⁷⁰

Inscribing the past in stone:

Although valuable in their own right, *rassemblements*, whatever their size, are only able to embody memory in social spaces for a fixed period of time; the past fragments and ebbs away as the participants return to their individual lives. Seeking more permanent historical markers and tapping into a wider French tradition, *pied-noir* associations have erected numerous monuments to their past. One of the most recent examples is the Cercle Algérieniste's 'mur des disparus' which was inaugurated on 25 November 2007 in Perpignan, its 55,000 euro cost covered primarily by donations from *pied-noir* associations. These edifices not only provide a focal point for gatherings, but also express the community's desire to see themselves and their history anchored in French soil and, by implication, the national historical narrative.

Demand for such structures from the *pied-noir* community has remained constant since the erection of the first Mémorial des Rapatriés in Nice in 1973.²⁷¹ However, these initiatives have not always been favourably received as the convoluted gestation of the proposed Mémorial national de la France d'Outre-Mer in Marseille illustrates. The monument was first proposed in 1996, but has yet to see the light of day because although most *pieds-noirs* regard it as a fitting tribute to 'la gloire de la France colonisatrice et de sa mission civilisatrice', others have opposed it as an unnecessary historical provocation.²⁷² The more conspiracy minded members of the *pied-noir* community read into the memorial's non-appearance further proof of official determination to erase their past so as to avoid embarrassment. More generally there is a deep sense of disappointment across the community. 'Nous regrettons', explained Yves Sainsot of ANFANOMA, 'les multiples ralentissements et obstacles auxquels s'est heurté le projet de Mémorial (qui semblait au point mort hier encore). Son rôle aurait été essentiel s'il n'avait pas été dévié en dépit de toutes nos interventions et mises en garde'.²⁷³ What made the Marseille monument particularly important was not just the historical significance of its location, but also the potential national resonance of its message. The majority of *rapatrié* monuments are locally based and addressed to a specific constituency, in contrast, commemorating *la France d'Outre-Mer*

²⁷⁰ Esclangon-Morin, *Rapatriés*, p.350.

²⁷¹ For a detailed analysis of the layers of memory inscribed onto this simple structure see Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.25.

²⁷² See for example: www.ldh-toulon.net/spip.php?article777 [26 October 2007]

²⁷³ ANFANOMA questionnaire response.

would have given legitimacy not only to French Algeria, but to the whole French colonial past thus placing the *pied-noir* community within a positive national historical narrative.

‘Une ville pas comme les autres’

Combining the social and the physical dimensions of *pied-noir* collective memory is the southern town of Carnoux-en-Provence. Described by its Deputy Mayor, Melchior Calandra, in 2000 as ‘une ville pas comme les autres’, Carnoux is indeed a unique place.²⁷⁴ Founded in the mid-1950s by *rapatriés* from the newly independent Morocco who envisaged creating ‘a small lot’ where they could enjoy a peaceful retirement, the nine original inhabitants quickly found themselves overwhelmed by an influx of *pieds-noirs* in 1962.²⁷⁵ The number of residents climbed sharply that year to 242, but two years later had leapt even more dramatically to 2000.²⁷⁶ Under the dominant influence of the *pieds-noirs*, Carnoux was transformed into a sizeable town, receiving official recognition from the local municipality in 1966. But perhaps more importantly it was also transformed into a living museum dedicated to the preservation of the memory and culture of French Algeria. Assiduously perpetuating rituals, recipes, music, and even accents, provided a way for the past to go on living in the present and thus helped the *pieds-noirs* assuage the pain of having lost their actual homeland. Nostalgia and selective remembering were given free reign in this physical and historical representation of an idealised Algeria that also provided a sanctuary where *pieds-noirs* could take refuge from a *métropole* they felt had consistently failed to understand them and their past.

Although described as ‘le symbol de l’Afrique perdu’, Carnoux is far more than a mere symbol.²⁷⁷ ‘L’Afrique du Nord reconstruit’ is perhaps a more accurate classification given that the key architectural features of the town were deliberately designed to mirror those of French Algeria. In particular, Carnoux boasts an exact replica of the famous Algiers basilica that not only shares the same name, Notre Dame d’Afrique, but also includes original clocks transported from the former colony. French Algeria is further recalled in the daily activities of Carnusiens who, after a hard day’s work, can wander down to their local café in the evening to enjoy an *apéro* of anisette with a side of merguez, indulge in some *tchatcha* with their neighbours, or simply share memories of their former lives while listening to songs mourning their exile. As one resident proudly proclaimed, ‘on a gardé nos habitudes, on a

²⁷⁴ ‘La cité des pieds-noirs’, *La cinquième rencontre*, aired 6 June 2000 (La cinquième).

²⁷⁵ ‘Naissance d’un village: Carnoux’, *Cinq colonnes à l’une*, aired 7 October 1966 (Channel 1).

²⁷⁶ Jean-Jacques Jordi, ‘1962 l’arrivée des Pieds-Noirs’, *Autrement: Français d’ailleurs, peuple d’ici*, 81 (1995), 103; ‘Naissance’, aired 7 October 1966.

²⁷⁷ Thérèse Rodolico, ‘Carnoux-en-Provence. Cité nouvelle des rapatriés’, *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie Marseille*, 76.5, (1966), 55.

gardé la manière de vivre'.²⁷⁸ Key to the importance of Carnoux is its permanence, which enables it to function as a kind of continual *rassemblement* that allows residents and visitors to immerse themselves in the ambiance of *là-bas* simply by stepping out of their front door.²⁷⁹ Carnoux thus offers a unique form of physical and social familiarity that has been of great comfort to the *pieds-noirs*, particularly in light of the trauma and chaos associated with their exile.

While it is possible to argue that this has been beneficial to the *pieds-noirs* of Carnoux, enabling them to 'faire le deuil de son univers quotidien' in a more supportive environment than that enjoyed by many of their compatriots, the obvious counter argument is that living somewhere where you are constantly surrounded by an imitation of your former life actually impedes the grieving process and has prevented Carnusien *pieds-noirs* from moving on, leaving them instead stranded in a artificial past.²⁸⁰ Because of course the North Africa that exists in Carnoux is not a reflection of life as it really was in French Algeria, but an idealised re-creation based firmly on the pre-war era. Echoing the rhetoric of associations, the convivial culture of a distinctive but inclusive population that Carnoux promotes is a historical simplification that sanitises the complex social and political structure of colonial Algeria.

Carnoux has been described as a 'véritable sanctuaire' for the *pied-noir* community on account of its potent combination of stability, familiarity and fraternity.²⁸¹ This was particularly important in the years immediately following 1962 since, having placed their motherland on a pedestal and prided themselves on their *francité* when in Algeria, many *pieds-noirs* were disheartened upon arrival in France to be confronted with what Calandra has called 'un espace de rejet' and to be left feeling 'étrangers parmi les leurs'.²⁸² This initial sense of ostracism has never fully dissipated and remains a source of considerable bitterness, even today. In contrast to this stood Carnoux, a place that self-consciously billed itself as somewhere *pieds-noirs* could feel *chez soi*. Here, new arrivals could relax knowing that they would be 'accueilli par des amis et compris par des gens qui avaient faire face aux mêmes difficultés'.²⁸³ Carnusien *pieds-noirs* were thus able to turn their sense of rejection and exclusion into a virtue as indicated by the local motto 'une minorité à toujours besoin de se retrouver majoritaire en quelque part'.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁸ 'La cité', aired 6 June 2000.

²⁷⁹ Michel-Chich, *Déracinés*, p.6.

²⁸⁰ Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, p.333.

²⁸¹ 'Naissance', aired 7 October 1966.

²⁸² 'Être pied-noir trente ans après', *Français si vous parliez*, aired 1 February 1993 (Channel 3).

²⁸³ Rodolico, 'Carnoux-en-Provence', p.55.

²⁸⁴ The motto is that of the association Carnoux-Racines. www.carnoux-racines.org [28 December 2008]

However, Carnoux is not simply a refuge from the real world. 'L'acte de foi des pieds-noirs en l'avenir' was how *PNM* described it and this is certainly how Carnusiens prefer to view their town, with one resident proudly declaring: 'Nous avons rebâti une cité, rebâti une vie avec nos souvenirs'.²⁸⁵ Carnoux is furthermore marketed as a space that owes nothing to France and the French, thus proving the *pied-noir* community's independence and self-sufficiency. 'Notre histoire n'est pas vieille', explained one Carnusien, 'mais quelle fierté de pouvoir dire: une ville créée par les rapatriés pour les rapatriés. C'est nous qui l'avons faite, c'est nous qui l'avons bâtie, c'est nous qui l'avons écrite'.²⁸⁶ Carnoux therefore represents success on the *pieds-noirs*' own terms, without compromising or diluting the distinctiveness of the identity and culture which have become such important touchstones over the years. All of which helps to explain why the annual pilgrimage to the cathedral in Carnoux on August 15 (Assumption) has remained so popular when attendance at the majority of similar events has declined significantly since the end of the 1970s.²⁸⁷

Yet, as the voiceover on *Naissance d'un village*, a 1966 documentary devoted to Carnoux, intones dramatically, 'Inévitablement il y a des ombres'.²⁸⁸ One of these shadows pertains to how a town founded by European settlers from Morocco seeking a quiet retirement spot was transformed into what Jean-Jacques Jordi has called 'le fief de la communauté pied-noir'.²⁸⁹ Although the idea that this was not an entirely peaceful and good-natured transition is dismissed by the Deputy Mayor, small asides made by residents of Carnoux not of Algerian origin indicate tensions between the various repatriate communities who live there and a certain degree of resentment towards the dominance of the *pied-noir* element. A more obvious shadow, brought out in both the 1966 documentary and a follow-up filmed in 2000, is the fact that Carnoux, supposed bastion of *pied-noir* hard work in rebuilding their lives, was not in fact built by the *pieds-noirs*, but by Algerian immigrant labourers. In 1966, the camera pans across North African labourers constructing new and modern houses for the *pieds-noirs*, to the insalubrious *bidonvilles* on the outskirts of Carnoux in which these workers and their families were forced to live. 'On a parfois l'impression qu'on n'a franchi ni les années, ni la méditerranée' remarks the presenter.²⁹⁰ Today the slums have vanished, along, it would seem, with ethnic diversity. Carnoux in 1966, but even more so in 2000, is

²⁸⁵ Jean Chaland, 'Carnoux: l'acte de foi des pieds-noirs en l'avenir', *PNM*, 92 (July-August 1998) 11; 'La cité', aired 6 June 2000.

²⁸⁶ Jordi, '1962', 102-103.

²⁸⁷ Jean-Jacques Jordi, 'Les pieds noirs: constructions identitaires et réinvention des origines', *H&M*, 1236 (March-April 2002), 21. Today Nîmes is the only comparable event in terms of the size of the crowd it attracts.

²⁸⁸ 'Naissance', aired 7 October 1966.

²⁸⁹ Jordi, '1962', 102.

²⁹⁰ 'Naissance', aired 7 October 1966. The programme goes on to record evidence of considerable hostility to the immigrant workers among the Carnoux population with one woman complaining bitterly that 'just like in Algeria' the 'Arabs' take all the jobs because they are willing to work for lower wages.

overwhelmingly white; white buildings in which white inhabitants with white hair live. Critics of the town use this as evidence that Carnoux represents exactly what the *pieds-noirs* have always sought: Algeria without the Algerians. Cited in support of this theory is the fact that Carnoux has been a Front National stronghold in the past with 30 per cent of the vote going to Le Pen's party in 1988 on a 68 per cent turnout. Since then the FN have campaigned hard in Carnoux and their 'public reunions' attract sizeable crowds. It would furthermore seem that support for the far right is a longstanding tradition in Carnoux with Calandra boasting that in 1965 Carnoux was 'la seule ville de France' in which Tixier-Vignancour obtained an absolute majority, securing 77 per cent of the vote.²⁹¹

This makes Carnoux a fascinating case study regarding the preservation and transmission of the colonial past in a post-colonial context. However, there is a twist in the tale that adds an intriguing extra dimension. Despite living in a town dedicated to perpetuating the mores and mentalities of French Algeria, in 1984 and again in 1999, Carnusien *pieds-noirs* created associations for the same purpose. The first of these, Carnoux-Racines, was formed in 1984 by the indefatigable Calandra who has been active in the community since its inception and has for an objective the 'Recherche, reconnaissance et défense de l'identité pied-noire'.²⁹² The association currently boasts 2600 members and organises a range of activities including the annual 15 August fete, historical conferences, and campaigns against commemorating 19 March.²⁹³ In contrast, Racine Pieds-Noirs, founded in 1999, is smaller with around 200 members and has a slightly more historical agenda, producing a glossy brochure in 2003 entitled *Les grandes dates de la mémoire 'Pieds-Noirs'* to coincide with 'l'année de l'Algérie en France'.²⁹⁴ However, its mission statement is very similar to that of Carnoux-Racines, focusing on the defence and promotion of the *pied-noir* identity, both to the next generation and to the wider French population.

The overlap between the agendas of both groups and that of the town itself is therefore considerable. Indeed, Calandra acknowledges the apparent paradox of needing an association somewhere like Carnoux, but rationalises it as a more personal extension of the sanctuary aspect of the town. 'Depuis sa création' he explains, 'nombre de nos compatriotes venaient à Carnoux remplis d'illusions. Ils tournaient en rond ne sachant où aller, ne trouvaient personne pour les accueillir, pour les renseigner, et finalement repartaient déçus'.²⁹⁵ Carnoux-Racines is therefore presented as outward looking; a kind of tourist

²⁹¹ 'La cité', aired 6 June 2000; Calandra, Melchior, 'Carnoux-Racines pour vous servir', *PNM*, 92 (July-August 1998), 13.

²⁹² www.carnoux-racines.org/accueil/index.php [28 December 2008]

²⁹³ www.carnoux-racines.org/presentation_association.html [28 December 2008]

²⁹⁴ For further details see: www.racinepiedsnoirs.com/publivre.htm [28 December 2008]

²⁹⁵ Calandra, 'Carnoux-Racines', 12.

information formed more for the benefit of those who do not have the luxury of living in Carnoux than the inhabitants themselves.

However, other comments from Calandra suggest that there may be motivations behind these associations that pertain not to the outside world, but to the anxieties and needs of the Carnusien *pieds-noirs* themselves. In particular, Calandra makes reference to the fact that the local municipalities have tended ‘à faire disparaître la connotation pieds-noirs que nous étions évertués à imprimer’.²⁹⁶ Indeed, there is a noticeable co-incidence in timing between the founding of Carnoux-Racines and a decision by the local authority to change some of the street names in Carnoux to make them more evocative of a rural province than a *pied-noir* enclave. For despite what the Carnusien *pieds-noirs* like to claim, in reality Carnoux has never been an exclusively *pied-noir* preserve. Indeed, Carnoux has been able to grow to its present day size of approximately 7000 inhabitants primarily because of its success in attracting non-*pieds-noirs* with the requisite skills and capital. Not all of the original residents have approved of such developments, fearing that they are threatening to overwhelm the town’s distinctive identity. Carnoux-Racines can thus be conceived of as a strategy to both protect Carnoux’s *Algérie française* attributes and to avoid the risk of commemorative complacency by fostering an active and engaged relationship with the town’s *pied-noir* heritage amongst residents.

In spite of the similarities in their agendas, the timing of the creation of Racine Pieds-Noirs points to yet another impetus and set of *pied-noir* anxieties. In the fifteen years between the founding of the two associations, the historical and commemorative climate in France with respect to the Algerian War altered considerably. As already outlined, the majority of these evolutions took place in the 1990s, culminating in the present memory wars phenomenon; a combat that the *pied-noir* community has not been slow to enter into. Emerging at the height of these battles in 1999, the year parliament classified the ‘events’ in Algeria as a ‘war’, Racine Pieds-Noirs reflects this altered context, particularly through their insistence on ‘Informer sans passion’. According to their literature this involves ‘Permettre une information lucide et rationnelle sur les réalités historiques et sociologiques de cette communauté’ to counter ‘la désinformation dont elle [la communauté] fait encore parfois l’objet’.²⁹⁷ In practice this is tantamount to sending their own, ‘correct’, history into battle against the ‘false’ representations being offered by other memory carriers.

In the decades since Carnoux was founded, the rules and the stakes of the commemorative game with respect to the War of Independence have changed considerably and in order to survive the *pied-noir* community has had to adapt. The same is true of Carnoux, for while the town has always been unique, it has never been isolated from wider

²⁹⁶ Ibid. 12.

²⁹⁷ www.racinepiedsnoirs.com/mission.html [28 December 2008]

currents within both the *pied-noir* community and French society. Consequently, in the present memory wars climate it is no longer enough to seek to preserve and protect the essence of *l'Algérie française* in a small corner of southern France, the battle to defend the *pied-noir* past and identity needs to be waged beyond the walls of the town and, it seems, through the medium of associations such as Racine Pieds-Noirs. Thus rather than the paradox that it first appears to be, the development of associations in Carnoux is both a logical complement to and a necessary evolution of the historical and memorial functions served by the town; all designed to ensure that having succeeded in re-creating a little slice of Algeria in France, the *pieds-noirs'* hard work doesn't fall to ruins. The example of Carnoux thus demonstrates that while the substance of the *pied-noir* worldview has not altered, the ways in which this patrimony is mobilised and targeted has changed in line with the broader cultural and historical context.

3. Evolutions in Activism: *Guerres de mémoire*, 1991-2007

External Manifestations

Having outlined the process by which the *pied-noir* lexicon was established, the focus now turns to analysing how this patrimony has been mobilised and disseminated. The period of greatest relevance is the 1990s onwards when the wider context with respect to the War of Independence underwent the most sustained and significant changes. Adapting to these circumstances has brought *pied-noir* associations into greater contact with other memory carriers and conduits. Although the community has never been completely isolated, their activism was largely internally directed until the memory wars phenomenon introduced an element of competition for control over the past and compelled them to begin projecting their historical understanding outwards to a greater extent. Raphaëlle Branche has compared the current situation to that of a disorganised orchestra in which ‘chaque instrument joue sa partition sans se préoccuper du voisin autrement peut-être qu’avec le souci de se faire entendre mieux que lui’.²⁹⁸ Applying this metaphor to the *pieds-noirs*, although they have carried on playing the same tune, during the 1990s their audience expanded greatly as the War of Independence re-emerged into public consciousness. However, simultaneously the orchestra also grew as more and more memory carriers entered the public arena. Because these new sections are not necessarily in harmony with the *pieds-noirs*, the result is that the community feel that they have to play louder, more insistently, and in a more diverse array of settings in order to ensure that their interpretation is the one conveyed to the listeners.

One manifestation of this trend has been the emergence of a new breed of *pied-noir* associations in the mid to late 1990s, epitomised by Véritas. Created in March 1996 by former Mayor of Algiers, Joseph Hattab Pacha, and his sister, Anne Cazal, the association and its journal *La lettre de Véritas* are notable for their stark views, intemperate polemic and graphic images (see Appendix H). What makes this organisation particularly interesting is that rather than simply a radical fringe element, Véritas appears to represent the extreme edge of a more general hardening of attitudes across *pied-noir* associations, with numerous association journals regularly giving column inches and advertising space to Véritas. Perhaps the most welcoming publication has been *PNM*, probably due to their contemporaneous status, both having been founded in the mid-1990s, and similar political orientations. However, even the selective GNPI included Véritas in issues 144 and 147 of its *bulletin*, which implies an at least tacit endorsement of the opinions and tactics promoted by Véritas among other *pied-noir* associations and their adherents.

²⁹⁸ Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris, 2005), p.7.

The founding of Véritas also highlights the impact of the changing political landscape in France during the 1990s and 2000s on the *pied-noir* community. The most obvious development during this period has been the rise of the far right, particularly the Front National (FN) which went from garnering 10.95 per cent of the vote in 1984, to securing a place in the second round of the 2002 presidential election. While it is not the case that all *pied-noirs* are FN voters, there is a connection between elements of the community and the far right.²⁹⁹ The strong pro-Le Pen sentiment that exists in certain quarters has its roots in their memory of the fact that Le Pen resigned his seat as a deputy in 1958 in order to enrol in the parachute regiment and fight to keep Algeria French. This fidelity to the *Algérie française* cause, combined with Le Pen's views on empire and immigration, and the FN's tendency to present themselves as martyrs in defence of truths that other political parties are too afraid to acknowledge and discuss, has helped forge and maintain links between the two.³⁰⁰ Le Pen has always been open about the fact that he regards the *pieds-noirs* as his natural constituents and has actively courted this vote throughout his political career.

However, even given the party's recent electoral gains, the FN remains a marginal political force and one that the majority of *pied-noir* associations remain reluctant to identify themselves with, at least publicly. What has therefore been more important in terms of the context in which the War of Independence has been debated was the presence, until 2007, in the Elysée Palace of Jacques Chirac who was felt by the *pieds-noirs* and others to be sympathetic to their cause in spite of his Gaullist roots.³⁰¹ Beginning with his support for the 1987 indemnification law while Prime Minister, Chirac went on to advocate numerous measures that benefited the *rapatrié* community, including the *harkis*, showing himself to be sensitive to their historical sensibilities, without ever actively endorsing their perspective. His election as President in 1995 represented a crucial turning point, prompting *Algérie française* nostalgics, according to Stora, to 'wake up'.³⁰² Subsequent years have witnessed the political and cultural ascent of the pro-colonial lobby as they have successfully built upon these more favourable conditions. Although difficult to demonstrate concretely, it is probable that the more strident expression of the *pied-noir* lexicon embodied in associations like Véritas on some level reflects the greater degree of confidence felt by *pieds-noirs* because of the

²⁹⁹ Ibid. 33.

³⁰⁰ Unfortunately, a detailed consideration of these links is beyond the scope of this thesis, although for further information see Christopher Flood and Hugo Frey, 'Defending the Empire in Retrospect: The Discourse of the Extreme Right', in *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, ed. by Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, (Basingstoke, 2002), pp.192-210; Christopher Flood and Hugo Frey, 'Questions of Decolonization and Post-Colonialism in the Ideology of the French Extreme Right', *European Studies*, 28 (1998), 69-88.

³⁰¹ Although this is not to suggest that Chirac's previous Gaullist allegiances were forgiven or forgotten by the *pieds-noirs*.

³⁰² Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère, *La guerre des mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial*, (Paris, 2007), p.20.

perceived endorsement and thus legitimization of their views at the highest levels. The impact of these developments during the 1990s upon the strategies employed by *pied-noir* associations to promote and defend their worldview will be analysed through a consideration of their interactions with key vectors of memory, in particular the media, academia, the judiciary and the Algerian immigrant community in France.

Faussaires de l'Histoire

Over the years, *pied-noir* associations have identified and pursued many enemies. While anyone who does not subscribe fully to their interpretation of the past is a legitimate target, these attacks are really aimed at a larger and more nebulous enemy: *désinformation*. *Désinformation* is defined as a deliberate and pernicious campaign of falsification designed to distort or occult the truth about French Algeria and the War of Independence. According to Pierre Dimech, the Cercle Algérianiste's resident expert on the subject, *désinformation* against the *pieds-noirs* entered a particularly virulent phase during the 1990s, having lain more or less dormant for the preceding three decades.³⁰³ '[E]n véhiculant des clichés réducteurs, quand ils ne sont pas entièrement faux', the forms that *désinformation* can take are multiple, as are its sources.³⁰⁴ What is, however, clear is that its principal conduit is the media. Although 'apparemment plurielle', the written press is in reality, according to *pieds-noirs*, 'aux mains des groupes ayant des intérêts convergents, et une même source d'inspiration', while television is described as 'le plat pays où souffle en force, pour ne pas dire en tempête, un vent unidirectionnel' emanating ultimately from the 'lobby politico-médaitque de l'Anti-France'.³⁰⁵ Faced with this conspiracy to pervert the course of history, *pied-noir* associations have mobilised to counter this false propaganda. The Cercle Algérianiste has a 'Comité de vigilance et riposte', while *PNM* was founded 'car il fallait absolument rétablir la vérité historique à travers un média propre, et non celui des autres qui travestit toujours tout...'³⁰⁶ *Véritas*, whose full title is 'Comité pour le rétablissement de la vérité historique sur l'Algérie française', is similarly dedicated to correcting misperceptions, proclaiming:

Nous nous attaquons à un mythe solidement implanté dans l'Histoire et dans la mémoire collective de nos compatriotes métropolitains à force d'images artificielles et d'images inconsistants créés à grand renfort de slogans, de fausses analogies et

³⁰³ Pierre Dimech, *La désinformation autour de la culture des pieds-noirs*, (Paris, 2006), p.9.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, p.19.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, pp.23, 32, 34; Jose Castano, 'Le lobby politico-médaitque de l'Anti-France', *EO*, 193 (November-December 1987), 4.

³⁰⁶ Jean-Marc Lopez cited in Danielle Michel-Chich, *Déracinés: les pieds-noirs aujourd'hui*, (Paris, 2000), p.170.

distorsions historiques et surtout, à notre rencontre, d'accusations calomnieuses ayant entraîné le silence médiatique que nous accable et nous baïllane.³⁰⁷

One of the most common tactics employed by these associations in combating *désinformation* is to sign petitions or write letters of complaint to various bodies and individuals highlighting the inaccuracies in their presentation of the *pied-noir* community and their history. This trend has become increasingly prominent across the full spectrum of *pied-noir* associations in the past two decades with no one, from the President of the Republic down, deemed either too great or too small to spill ink over. Although it is often the case that the *désinformation* itself matters less than the opportunity it provides to publicly reiterate the central tenets of the lexicon, this correspondence is also important because it signifies the growth of this more active form of memorial participation befitting the more dynamic commemorative context. The range of competing historical narratives that had emerged by the 1990s meant that it was no longer sufficient for members to simply read and reminisce about past glories, this history now has to be actively defended by each and every reader against the increasingly visible alternative interpretations. In contrast to *bulletin*-induced passivity, letter writing offers a way to perpetuate a sense of engagement and of belonging to a community after the last page of the journal is turned. It requires effort, demonstrates investment, and will hopefully galvanise others. Even a lack of a response to correspondence can potentially be turned into a motivational tool, indicating weakness in the position of the opposition. It is also the case that as an aging population, many of whom are now retired, the *pied-noir* community are ideally placed to exercise the necessary vigilance against *désinformation*.

Although very little escapes the notice of activists, there is a proportionate relationship between the profile of the programme/article in question and the reaction it arouses. The multi-part documentary series *La guerre d'Algérie* (1990) and *Les années algériennes* (1991) by Peter Batty and Benjamin Stora were therefore exceptional, not only in the comprehensiveness of their treatments of the War of Independence, still a relatively under explored subject at that time, but for the level of commentary they provoked within the *pied-noir* community.³⁰⁸ Batty's documentary was labelled 'la plus violente agression médiatique' directed at the community since the exodus of 1962, and deemed so offensive that the Cercle Algérieniste felt compelled to establish a committee of opposition which they called 'Interdit aux chiens et aux pieds-noirs' in reference to the assertion of one interviewee

³⁰⁷ Joseph Hattab Pacha, 'L'affaire de tous', *LV*, 46 (October 2000), 2.

³⁰⁸ These levels of criticism were not to be repeated until Patrick Rotman's *L'ennemi intime* in 2002. Although in this instance the recent *Le Monde* torture controversy and its sequels undoubtedly exacerbated reactions amongst the *pied-noir* community.

that neither Arabs nor dogs were allowed onto certain beaches during French rule.³⁰⁹ Such criticism paled, however, in comparison to the opprobrium directed at the ‘très subversives’ *Les années algériennes*, the Constantinois origin of its director adding an extra edge to the accusations levelled in the *pied-noir* press.³¹⁰ Envisaged as a corrective to patchy historiography that had failed to situate the war ‘dans sa richesse’, Stora hoped that by showing ‘une guerre réelle’ in its full context and through a very public medium he would contribute to ‘exorciser’ the conflict to some degree.³¹¹ This was not however, how *Les années algériennes* was received within the *pied-noir* community. *L’Algérieniste* subjected it to a twenty-three-page autopsy before concluding that rather than a historical endeavour, the documentary represented ‘une subjectivité sans contrôle’.³¹² The journal found particularly offensive the caricatured portrait of the community: ‘Rien n’y manqué: la gifle, le verre d’eau vendu, le serviteur exploité, l’enfant battu, le mépris et sa dangereuse contagion, l’absence de conscience politique, la grossièreté du colon’.³¹³

Ultimately, what the *pieds-noirs* objected to in both documentaries, and more generally with respect to *désinformation*, is what they regarded as an unbalanced content that favours the FLN and their supporters while ignoring their suffering. Yet in truth the broad focus of *la guerre d’Algérie* and *Les années algériennes* inherently dictated that less attention would be focused specifically on the experiences of the settlers because both documentaries placed these within the chronology of the entire war, rather than simply concentrating on the final few months. In the interests of enhancing historical knowledge, these projects also deliberately sought to highlight aspects of the war that *pied-noir* presentations prefer to omit or downplay, such as the inequalities of the colonial system, the practice of torture by the French army, the violence of the OAS, and 17 October 1961. It was furthermore the case that *Les années algériennes* ushered in a new era in terms of the way in which the conflict was discussed on camera. The studio debate following the final instalment of the series was heralded by host Daniel Bilalian as the first time protagonists from all sides of the conflict had been assembled together on French television. Contributions thus came from diverse figures including Bernard Tricot, one of the negotiators of the Evian Accords, Henri Martinez, an ex-OAS commando, *harki* Rachid Mimouni, as well as former FLN militants Yacef Saadi and Mohammed Harbi.³¹⁴ Such occasions were bound to be more acrimonious

³⁰⁹ ‘Histoire Actualité’, *L’Algérieniste*, 51 (September 1990), 3; Georges Bosc, ‘Interdit aux chiens et aux pieds-noirs’, *L’Algérieniste*, 51 (September 1990), i.

³¹⁰ ‘Réflexion: Décolonisations bâclées: Histoire ou actualité?’, *PNM*, 22 (January 1992), 26.

³¹¹ Bertrand le Gendre and Benjamin Stora, ‘Une guerre qui ne voulait pas dire son nom’, *Le Monde*, 23 September 1991, p.16.

³¹² ‘Les années algériennes’, *L’Algérieniste*, 56 (December 1991), 2.

³¹³ *Ibid.* 2.

³¹⁴ ‘Spécial guerre d’Algérie’, *Mardi soir*, aired 8 October 1991 (Channel 2).

than when participants were more ideologically homogenous, although conflict has also frequently been a feature of exclusively *rapatrié* debates.

Prior to the 1990s, debates and documentaries on the war were generally infrequent, French-orientated, and dealt largely with a single subject, event or group. Within this restricted canon, the *pieds-noirs* and their views were generally well represented with at least one community spokesperson present, very often Jacques Roseau. There were also several occasions when they constituted the majority of participants, or were the sole focus of programmes including *Pour ceux d'Algérie, que reste-t-il du passé?* (1983), *Droit de réponse aux pieds-noirs* (1986), and *Rapatriés: 25 ans de nostalgie* (1987).³¹⁵ Yet the right to express their opinions is not something that the *pied-noir* community feel the French media accords them as the 'Interdit aux chiens et aux pieds-noirs' manifesto made clear in its call 'Pour l'abolition de l' "apartheid politico-médiatique"'.³¹⁶ Even when invited to participate in televised debates, *pieds-noirs* still often feel that they are not given the opportunity to speak freely. Michel Lagrot told *L'Algérieniste* that he felt unable to comment openly during *Ça se discute* due to the 'pensée unique obligé' and the fact that 'le terrorisme intellectuel est parfois obligé de recourir au terrorisme physique et l'on n'était peut-être pas tout à fait sûr de l'assistance'.³¹⁷

This begs the question: how would the *pieds-noirs* like to be presented by the media? *Exergue* by Catherine Jeannin, broadcast in the summer of 1992, offers one answer. AOCAN president, Geneviève de Ternant, described it as 'une émission qui m'a fait chaud au coeur' because it had enabled her to retrieve 'le vrai visage de notre Algérie fraternelle et dynamique, le vrai visage des Pieds-Noirs "devorés de nostalgie"'.³¹⁸ This 'vrai visage' included all the key elements of the historical lexicon from the humble and hard-working settler, through the multicultural harmony of the colony, to the creation of the *pied-noir* 'sans terre mais non sans culture'.³¹⁹ Particularly revealing was de Ternant's concluding remark: 'Pour une fois la parole n'a pas été donnée aux porteurs de valises ni au FLN'.³²⁰ Returning to Branche's orchestra metaphor, this reiterates the idea that for the *pieds-noirs* history can have only one true tune, the one on their music sheet. It also underlines Stora's observation that each group connected to the war patronises only those media that affirm their own

³¹⁵ 'Pour ceux d'Algérie, que reste-t-il du passé?', *Les dossiers de l'écran*, aired 5 April 1983 (Channel 2); *Droit de réponse aux pieds-noirs*, aired 8 November 1986 (Channel 1); 'Rapatriés: 25 ans de nostalgie', *Camera 2*, aired 22 June 1987 (Channel 2).

³¹⁶ Bosc, 'Interdit aux chiens', ii.

³¹⁷ 'Ça se discute!', *L'Algérieniste*, 90 (June 2000), 2.

³¹⁸ Geneviève de Ternant, 'Editorial', *EO*, 221 (July-August 1992), 1.

³¹⁹ Ibid. 1. Similar plaudits were bestowed upon Giles Perez's *Les pieds-noirs, histoire d'une blessure*. See *EO*, 308 (January-February 2007), 20.

³²⁰ de Ternant, 'Editorial', 1.

worldview, confirming *désinformation* and the bid to combat it as a perfect example of cloistered remembering in action.³²¹

Of course it is also the case that within the *pied-noir* associational milieu there are groups who define their agenda in more open terms, such as Mémoire d'Afrique du Nord who believe that 'la mémoire n'est pas une, elle est complexe, multiple, elle appartient à tous, elle est plurielle'.³²² However, behind the rhetoric, the association's journal offers a very conventional *pied-noir* reading of themes including the positive role played by France in Algeria and the patriotic status of the OAS. It therefore seems less the case that they support the idea of multiple memories, and more that they avoid the starker presentations of Véritas. In contrast, Coup de Soleil, founded with the intention to 'lutter contre l'ignorance et l'incompréhension' and seeking to '[r]éunir des Maghrébins et des Pieds-noirs, des "immigrés" et des "rapatriés"', is more committed to a pluralistic understanding of the past.³²³ Although the organisation has failed to attract members or press coverage equivalent to groups such as ANFANOMA or the Cercle Algérieniste, it is this and similar groups that Buono probably had in mind when she detected the emergence of a new category of *pied-noir* activist in the 1990s. Labelling them 'reconstructeurs modernes', she defined this cohort as the opposite of 'nostalgiques' because they sought to celebrate their heritage, while simultaneously avoid enclosing themselves in nostalgia and negative clichés such as "L'Algérie de papa", l'OAS, les souvenirs victimisant...³²⁴ While not denying the existence of this strand within the *pied-noir* associational movement, the evidence suggests that they were never a dominant element. More significant during the 1990s, especially given the larger commemorative context, was the birth of organisations such as Véritas who indicate not a break with previous positions, but rather more radical incarnations of long-standing attitudes and tendencies. This is something that Buono implicitly acknowledges when she admits that the 'modernes' have failed because when 'confrontés à l'incroyable difficulté de leur tâche' they have 'préféré se replier sur le discours "nostalgiques"'.³²⁵ Over the years there has thus been both a quantitative and qualitative shift in the nature of mobilisations within the *pied-noir* associational community as methods have become more sophisticated but, more importantly, the stakes have been raised. This is particularly apparent when the relationship between the *pied-noir* community and academia are considered.

³²¹ Benjamin Stora, *Imaginaires de guerre: les images dans les guerres d'Algérie et du Viet-nam*, (Paris, 2004), p.190.

³²² Jeanine de la Hogue, 'Paroles de mémoire', *Mémoire plurielle*, 23 (April 2000), 10.

³²³ www.coupdesoleil.net [30 November 2007].

³²⁴ Her 'surprising' ideal type of this new breed of *pied-noir* is Enrico Macias in his late 1990s come back incarnation of a nostalgia-free celebration of the diversity of Algerian influence and traditions. Buono, *Pieds-noirs*, pp.101-107, 113-115, 121-122.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* p.136.

‘Nous sommes des témoins’

The importance attached to history by *pied-noir* associations means that a commensurate degree of significance is accorded to the activities of professional historians. Several scholars have been warmly welcomed by the *pieds-noirs* including Rosemary Averell Manes, who was favourably received by the Cercle Algérieniste on account of her stated appreciation of the persistent prejudice she felt the community suffered from, and Andrea L. Smith, who noted that her dissertation project gave ‘a renewed sense of pride’ to her interviewees because it ‘validated, in their view, the importance of their own history’.³²⁶ Historians who advance broadly favourable or sympathetic readings of this past are in turn themselves favourably regarded by associations, as the repeated invitations issued by the Cercle Algérieniste to Jean Jacques Jordi and the conservative Guy Pervillé demonstrate. The logical corollary is that academics who have adopted a more critical stance have both their work and themselves regularly denounced. This treatment has been meted out to an illustrious roster of names including Charles Robert Ageron, Jean-Luc Einaudi, Raphaëlle Branche, Sylvie Thénault, Claude Liauzu and Claire Mauss-Copeaux whose book, *Appelés en Algérie: la parole confisquée*, Véritas judged had ‘probablement sorti tout droit d’une imagination fallacieuse mais fertile’.³²⁷ One historian stands out however, as attracting the bulk of *pied-noir* opprobrium: Benjamin Stora. Although an eminent scholar in the eyes of most people, to the *pieds-noirs* Stora is a ‘pseudo-intellectuel qui déforme à plaisir la vérité historique à travers le prisme de sa mauvaise foi’.³²⁸ As a fellow son of Algeria, *pied-noir* activists had high expectations that Stora would prove a valuable ally in their quest to legitimate their particular reading of the French presence in Algeria.³²⁹ However, these hopes have gone unfulfilled, as Stora has instead taken into account of a range of perspectives in order to create a nuanced historical picture. Stora’s Algerian roots and high media profile make him an obvious target for *pied-noir* associations, but beyond these elements, *pied-noir* objections to Stora are grounded more generally in the collision of two very different phenomena: history and memory. This has a wider significance because it is precisely the competing claims of these forms of knowledge that the state must attempt to reconcile when deciding how to understand and commemorate France’s colonial past.

³²⁶ Georges Bosc, ‘Une Américaine à Narbonne’, *L’Algérieniste*, 46 (June 1989), 129; Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*, (Bloomington, 2006), p.13.

³²⁷ Claire Mauss-Copeaux, *Appelés en Algérie: la parole confisquée*, (Paris, 2002); Anne Cazal, ‘Le dernier mot à la barbarie’, *LV*, 33 (May 1999), 3.

³²⁸ ‘Les faussaires de l’Histoire’, *LV*, 20 (February 1998), 5.

³²⁹ The fact that Stora has openly stated that he considers himself ‘plûtôt juif que pied-noir’ is irrelevant to *pied-noir* associations since they consider both Algerian Jews and *harkis* as subsets of their own *rapatrié* community. *Les repères de l’histoire*, aired 30 November 2003 (Fr5).

As far as Stora is concerned, a historian is someone who ‘cherche à expliquer l’événement’ and who ‘se situe dans une logique de rationalité, de distance critique’.³³⁰ Although he is aware that the historian ‘n’est pas au-dessus de la mêlée’ and has never denied his own *engagé* status, Stora nonetheless understands the historian’s role as ‘entendre la parole des autres’, engaging in research and dialogue in order to restore the past in its full complexity.³³¹ When asked how criticisms from the *pieds-noirs*, including branding him a ‘spécialiste trotskyste de la désinformation’, affect him, Stora replied: ‘Cela m’affecte d’autant plus que je m’efforce de restituer l’histoire avec rigueur et honnêteté intellectuelle, sans céder sur des principes non négociables comme la défense des Droits de l’homme ou la condamnation du système colonial’.³³² Historical knowledge for Stora is not only something he values highly, but also something that exists on a clearly defined plane, separate from his personal recollections of Algeria and the war. From his childhood Stora remembers being fearful of Algerians, but only actually discovering them ‘bien plus tard’ because during the conflict his *quartier* was surrounded by barbed wire and closed off. He has also spoken of his ‘anguish’ when the moment came to leave Algeria.³³³ However, such comments are confined to non-academic forums, while during historically orientated appearances and interventions, Stora is always keen to stress that he is present as a professional historian, a detached commentator, not a personally involved historical actor.

In contrast to Stora, *pieds-noirs* often find it difficult to distinguish between history and memory. The description provided by Anne Cazal of her book, *Ravin rouge*, offers a case in point. Classifying it as a ‘roman historique’ she goes on to specify ‘Le fondement de mon ouvrage est, rigoureusement, historique...C’est un témoignage authentique...pour contribuer, en toute modestie, à sauver une mémoire que l’on dit, à bien juste titre, en péril...’³³⁴ Rather than rigorous intellectual interrogation from a critical distance, *pieds-noirs* tend to understand history as experience-based recollection in which authenticity is automatically accorded to witness testimony. Whereas Stora argues that ‘la mémoire constitue l’objet d’étude sur lequel porte la réflexion historique’, *pieds-noirs* take the opposite view that memory is the source of all history. They therefore place a greater store in personal accounts than in archives, believing that ‘ceux qui n’ont pas vécu cette Algérie complexe ne peuvent se la représenter vraiment’.³³⁵ This is not merely the sign of a healthy degree of scepticism towards archives, since if an official source can be found that supports a *pied-noir* reading of an event then this is held to be sacrosanct and no alternative piece of evidence, whatever its origin, is considered

³³⁰ ‘Désinformation’, *PNM*, 66 (March 1996), 8; Stora and Leclère, *La guerre*, pp.89-91.

³³¹ Stora and Leclère, *La guerre*, p.91.

³³² *Ibid.* p.91.

³³³ ‘Benjamin Stora’, *Le Divan*, aired 10 February 1991 (Channel 3).

³³⁴ Cazal, *Contes*, p.154.

³³⁵ Pierre Goinard, ‘En finir avec la désinformation’, *L’Algérieniste*, 52 (December 1990), 2.

sufficiently compelling to undermine this.³³⁶ The *pied-noir* community have also established pseudo-historical institutes specifically to challenge professional academic accounts and institutions, notably the Centre des études pied-noir (CEPN) in Nice and the Centre de documentation historique sur l'Algérie (CDHA) in Aix-en-Provence, which is also the home of the Centre des archives d'Outre-Mer (CAOM). Outlining its *raison d'être*, the CDHA noted that 'L'histoire n'est pas écrite par les vaincus...il ne faut certes pas compter sur d'autres que nous pour reconstituer ce climat [de l'Algérie française]'.³³⁷

When academics, or indeed anyone, cites material in support of an alternative interpretation of the past, this is regarded by *pied-noirs* not as part of the natural process of advancing historical knowledge, but a personally motivated attack on them and their memories. The obituary for Claude Liauzu offered by the Cercle Algérieniste, for example, described him as the 'Adversaire acharné de toute expression de la mémoire et des souffrances des pieds-noirs'.³³⁸ Such comments stem from the feeling that academic discourse constitutes a form of violation because it strips the *pied-noir* experience of 'sa singularité émotionnelle' by reducing deolonisation to a subject like any other. As Stora rightly concludes, *pieds-noirs* 'ne veulent pas que les souffrances soient noyées dans un océan de notes en bas de pages'.³³⁹

It is not the case that Stora, or indeed any historian of this period, is seeking to deny a place to the *pieds-noirs*' memories, but rather to stress that this place is as one source among many that need to be consulted in order to reconstruct a fuller picture of the past. However, the idea that memory is not equivalent to history is anathema to many *pied-noir* associations who have based much of their lexicon on precisely such an equation. This conflation of history and memory is indicative of a wider trend that has seen the status of testimony elevated from being 'un pis-aller à départ d'archives', to a source 'à part entière'.³⁴⁰ First hand accounts are increasingly seen as a vital component of contemporary history, offering insights into aspects of the past that would otherwise remain unknown. This heightened respect for bearing witness, which has its antecedents in the legacy of the Second World War and the Holocaust, has been given a further impetus by the growth in popularity of oral history. Together these have produced a greater willingness amongst people to divulge their experiences to historians, helping to create a virtuous circle of testimony. These *paroles*, particularly when disseminated through the mass media, also appeal because they appear to democratise and enhance the accessibility of the past; the words of an anonymous bystander

³³⁶ The work of Maurice Faivre, who has explored a range of military archives in great detail, is often used in this manner as will be discussed in Chapter 7.

³³⁷ 'Témoignages du passé. Opérations souvenirs', *L'Algérieniste*, (1977), 12.

³³⁸ 'La disparition de Claude Liauzu', *L'Algérieniste*, 111 (June 2007), 9.

³³⁹ Benjamin Stora, 'Maroc-Algérie: Retour du passé et écriture de l'histoire', *Vingtième siècle*, 68 (October-December 2000), 113.

³⁴⁰ Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.245.

being regarded as equally valuable as those of a statesman. All these developments have enriched and broadened history immensely. However, in the hands of certain *pied-noir* groups, being an eyewitness has become the ultimate, and indeed only, criteria of historical authenticity. As such, it is less a tool through which to explore the past and more a weapon used to exclude alternative sources and interpretations:

Nous sommes des témoins. Des témoins vivants, bien souvent oculaires, et à ce titre, nous représentons une source d'information autrement plus importante pour ceux qui veulent objectivement écrire l'Histoire que les Archives qu'ils sont, de plus en plus autorisés à compulsier. Archives biaisées, tronquées, faussées par leurs propres auteurs pour mieux dissimuler leurs crimes!³⁴¹

In light of such attitudes, it is difficult to support Joëlle Hureau's contention that the *pieds-noirs* want to avoid over-simplifying their history, preferring a version that is 'ni coupable, ni innocent, ni odieuse, ni parfaite'.³⁴² Instead, what appears to be happening is closer to the analysis offered by Antoine Prost whereby 'Victims are victims only when being in no sense guilty of complicity in their suffering. Suffering and losses are necessary but not sufficient conditions for victimhood. Innocence is needed too'.³⁴³ This is echoed in Stora's observation that 'la bonne conscience est complète, c'est-à-dire que les pieds-noirs ont le sentiment de n'avoir rien fait du particulier, de ne pas être responsables pour le particulier'.³⁴⁴ As has already been mentioned, this may reflect the fact that the community feels forced by what they see as the entirely black picture painted of them by others to render themselves completely white in response. When asked how the *pieds-noirs* and their associations were perceived by French society, Gérard Rosenzweig of the Cercle Algérieniste replied: 'Pas toujours d'une façon très positive – car nous refusons le rôle de "bouc-émissaire" que la France veut nous faire porter. Nous refusons d'être coupable de tout'.³⁴⁵ The end result is an increasingly aggressive stance whereby other memory carriers are not engaged with in any meaningful way, but simply used to strengthen the *pied-noir* conviction that they are the real victims.

³⁴¹ Anne Cazal, 'Cette vérité qui fait si peur!', *LV*, 51 (March 2001), 2.

³⁴² Joëlle Hureau, *La Mémoire des pieds-noirs de 1830 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2001), p.171.

³⁴³ Antoine Prost, 'The Algerian War in French Collective Memory', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, (Cambridge, 1999), p.176.

³⁴⁴ *Algérie, Montpellier: aller simple*, aired 25 May 2002 (Fr5).

³⁴⁵ Cercle Algérieniste de Champagne et du Gard Est questionnaire response.

‘Faire des procès’

Over the past few decades, *pied-noir* groups have paid close attention to the evolution of public discussions and commemoration of the Vichy period, appearing to regard this as a model in terms of both strategy and end result. This is especially apparent in the recent drive by associations to attain judicial legitimation for their interpretation of the past. Oliver Lalieu traces this back to the 1987 trial of Klaus Barbie, which revealed ‘la légitimité plusieurs années après les faits invoqués d’en demander réparation et d’en tirer les leçons’; what today we would classify as a *devoir de mémoire*.³⁴⁶ Although existing legislation relating to *crimes contre l’humanité* and *crimes de guerre* was formulated precisely so that events in Algeria could not be brought under the legal spotlight at a later date, not least because of the series of amnesty laws passed during the 1960s and 1970s, this has not deterred the *pieds-noirs*, nor indeed other groups connected to the war.³⁴⁷ In 1997, for example, Véritas spearheaded a suit against General Joseph Katz accusing him of crimes against humanity for his role on 5 July 1962 in Oran. While calls for this kind of legal action to be undertaken were not new, the commemorative climate in France at this time was influential in solidifying general demands into concrete action. As Véritas’ chief lawyer, René Blanchot, explained: ‘A l’heure où l’on parle de plus en plus de la Mémoire et de l’Histoire de l’œuvre française en Algérie qu’il faut réhabiliter, comment ne pas remplir ce devoir de vérité que nous devons assurer devant l’Eternel et pour l’honneur de la France?’³⁴⁸ Véritas was clearly inspired by the Papon trial that was unfolding concurrently and numerous references were made in subsequent coverage of the ongoing legal process. In particular, the success of that trial in obtaining a conviction against the former Bordeaux *préfet* was regarded as a positive omen.³⁴⁹

Unfortunately for Véritas, on 21 January 2000 a judge ruled that the deaths in Oran came under the rubric of ‘arrestations illégales suivies de tortures et d’assassinats’ and were thus subject to the statute of limitations which had expired. Véritas launched an appeal, but Katz died before this could be heard; he was ninety-three. ‘Nous ne pouvons que regretter’ wrote Hattab Pacha, ‘qu’il n’ait pas vécu centenaire pour faire face aux familles des victimes’, although AOCZ’s president seemed satisfied that ‘Sans doute a-t-il été accueilli en enfer par de Gaulle et grillent-ils ensemble pour expier leurs crimes’.³⁵⁰ Hattab Pacha subtitled his editorial ‘Le boucher d’Oran devant la tribune divan mais l’action civile n’est

³⁴⁶ Olivier Lalieu, ‘L’invention du “devoir de mémoire”’, *Vingtième siècle*, 69 (January-March 2001), 93.

³⁴⁷ The use of the judicial system by *harki* activists will be analysed in Chapter 6.

³⁴⁸ René Blanchot, ‘Le crime de génocide commis par Joseph Katz, le boucher d’Oran’, *LV*, 16 (October 1997), 10.

³⁴⁹ René Blanchot, ‘Katz, le boucher d’Oran’, *LV*, 22 (April 1998), 6.

³⁵⁰ Joseph Hattab Pacha, ‘Le mot du Président’, *LV*, 51 (March 2001), 2; Geneviève de Ternant, ‘Tolérance zéro’, *EO*, 274 (May-June 2001), 1.

pas éteinte', suggesting that further lawsuits would follow. This reflects a broader mentality whereby *pied-noir* associations and their members feel entitled to the same judicial recognition and legitimization that they perceive the Jewish population have obtained with respect to Vichy:

Le sang d'un Français d'Algérie compte autant que le sang d'un Français de métropole d'origine israélite. Le drame de la Shoah fut épouvantable et nous bouleverse profondément mais dans l'Histoire, avec le sang de nos compatriots, il est écrit d'autres crimes contre l'humanité qui ne peuvent ni ne doivent être occultés ou oubliés.³⁵¹

Branche and Savarese both regard this development as connected to the wider problem of linking knowledge with recognition, which causes truth and justice to become intertwined and all roads to lead to the courtroom.³⁵² Attempting to formulate a historical narrative through the statute books is the ultimate expression of the omnipresent *pied-noir* desire to establish one definitive version of the past, theirs. Regarding the national historical narrative as either too rigid, or too fragile to support multiple, potentially discordant representations, associations have adopted a series of strategies to drown out competing voices. However, none of these offer the finality that a judicial ruling in their favour augurs. As Savarese has highlighted, such a situation would mean that 'Quand il y aura des mensonges qui mettent en cause la communauté, on pourra faire des procès'.³⁵³ Hence the future, as predicted by Véritas, is likely to include many further lawsuits similar to that launched against Katz, despite the fact that the outcome of the Papon trial, in historical terms, has not brought to fruition the conclusive univocal inscription of the Vichy years that the *pieds-noirs* so ardently seek for themselves and their history.

On 23 February 2005, however, an unparalleled opportunity to give legal sanctity to a positive evaluation of France's colonial past presented itself with the passing of Loi 2005-158. In addition to expressing the recognition of the nation to those men and women 'qui ont participé à l'oeuvre accomplie par la France' in her former colonies and providing further indemnification allocations for *pieds-noirs* and *harkis*, Article 4 of the law stipulated that school curricula 'reconnaissent en particulier le rôle positif de la présence française outre-

³⁵¹ Anne Cazal, 'Dernier munité: Procès Katz', *LV*, 40 (February 2000), 11.

³⁵² Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.13; Éric Savarese, *Algérie, la guerre des mémoires*, (Paris, 2007), p.147.

³⁵³ Savarese, *Algérie*, p.147.

mer, notamment en Afrique du Nord'.³⁵⁴ This single clause not only encapsulated the ethos of the *pied-noir* lexicon but promised to promote it across the education system, the jewel in the crown as far as associations were concerned in their battle to secure influence over the official historical narrative. Even though many felt it could have gone further in areas such as financial provision and the assignation of responsibility for the 'mistakes' committed during the War of Independence, the law was nonetheless welcomed by associations as 'une étape importante'.³⁵⁵ In contrast to the current situation where children were taught a distorted version of history through 'une mainmise d'appareils qu'on peut qualifier de "proche du marxisme-léninisme"' by teachers who were 'eux-mêmes imprégnés de ces théories', *pieds-noirs* hoped that the record would now be set straight.³⁵⁶

Unfortunately, what the *pieds-noirs* regarded as a long-overdue correction was perceived by others as the unacceptable imposition of a unilateral official history and an affront to the neutrality of the educational establishment. A range of groups, comprising scholars, schoolteachers, trade unionists, politicians, and representatives from various 'immigrant' communities, mobilised to protest against this particular clause. However, having lobbied hard to get the measure onto the statute books, *pieds-noirs* and their allies were equally determined to protect Article 4.³⁵⁷ In the ensuing months, bitter words were exchanged between supporters of the law, or 'groupes de pression nostalgiques du colonialisme et revanchards', and opponents, or 'des gaullo-gauchistes' and 'des négationnistes repentants', until Chirac took the unusual step in January 2006 of using his presidential veto to rescind Article 4 in order, he stated, to 'apaiser les esprits'.³⁵⁸ The *pieds-noirs* interpreted his decision not as an attempt to achieve national reconciliation, but as another example of the discrimination to which they and their history were regularly subjected. Defending Article 4, an ANFANOMA representative wrote, 'Précisions que, dans notre esprit, il n'est nullement question de revanche mesquine, mais simplement de justice et d'équité'.³⁵⁹ Extending this position, associations made the argument that Article 4 did not represent the infliction of a unilateral interpretation of history on the grounds that 'Absolument rien dans la loi

³⁵⁴ For the full text of the law see www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000444898&dateTexte [18 December 2008]

³⁵⁵ Yves Sainsot, 'Une loi en demi-teinte', *FH*, 458-459 (February 2005), 1.

³⁵⁶ Dimech, *La désinformation*, p.27.

³⁵⁷ Proposed by right-wing deputy Christian Vanneste, the law was lobbied for by 57 deputies from various parties who collectively constituted the Groupe d'Etudes sur les Rapatriés. For further details on the law and the profile of its advocates see Peter Dunwoodie, 'Postface: History, Memory and Identity – Today's Crisis, Yesterday's Issue', *French History*, 20.3 (September 2006), 319.

³⁵⁸ www.ldh-toulon.net/spip.php?article1058 [18 December 2008]; Jean-Yves Faberon, 'La loi du 23 février 2005', *L'Algérieniste*, 112 (December 2005), 13; Pierre Cattin, 'Le pesanteur de la désinformation', *LV*, 96 (October 2005), 4.

³⁵⁹ Nicole Ferrandis-Delvarre, 'Demande à l'abrogation de l'alinéa 2 de la loi Taubira', *FH*, 469-470 (April-May 2006), 16.

n'empêche les chercheurs d'étudier tous les aspects de la présence française outre-mer', it would simply 'rétablir l'équilibre'.³⁶⁰ Therefore, in the eyes of the *pieds-noirs* it was those who opposed the law that threatened intellectual neutrality and liberty. Associations thus denounced those who 'par dogmatisme, refusent l'oeuvre positive de la France en Algérie alors que les preuves abondent' and the hypocrisy of historians who 'ont imposé leur propre loi, non écrite celle-là, ainsi qu'une vision hémiplegique de l'histoire qui consiste à ne présenter colonisation que comme une succession d'abominations'.³⁶¹

Loi 2005-158 brought the *pieds-noirs* closer than ever before to obtaining national legitimisation for their historical understanding. Although their aspirations were ultimately frustrated, producing great bitterness directed at multiple familiar sources from Stora to Bouteflika, the whole process seems to have galvanised and further radicalised the community.³⁶² This is evident in the formation of the Coordination nationale des Français d'Algérie (CNFA), a new *pied-noir* attempt at federation, and in the increased attention this body, but also existing associations, have been directing at the twin themes of immigration and Islam. The 2005 banlieue riots, the Mohammed cartoon affair, and even the film *Indigènes* have all garnered substantial column inches and invective largely revolving around the favourable treatment *pieds-noirs* see being accorded to the minorities in question, in contrast to what they regard as their own recent rejection by the French nation and its leaders.³⁶³

'Touristes ingrats'

Many of the trends outlined above find expression in the evolving presentation of Algeria and Algerians offered through *pied-noir* associations. It therefore seems appropriate to conclude this chapter with a case-study examination of the relationship between these two groups, especially given that a similar analysis will be provided concerning the *harki* community and

³⁶⁰ Faberon, 'La loi', 6; 'As before', *FH*, 460-461 (April 2005), 4. Although it is notable that what these negative attributes might be is never specified in contrast to the detailed expositions of the positive contributions made by France.

³⁶¹ 'Colonisation', *PNM* 137 (January 2006), 12. Stora's opposition to loi 2005-158 earned him condemnation on similar grounds from the *pied-noir* community who deemed him the epitome of 'une pensée historique à sens unique', a slur that prompted Stora to take the unusual step of defending his reputation in print, writing in *Le Monde*: 'Professeur des universitaires depuis de longues années en France et à l'étranger, j'ai toujours travaillé dans un souci de rigueur scientifique...'. Benjamin Stora, 'Au courrier des lecteurs: Souci de rigueur', *Le Monde*, 3 February 2006

³⁶² Bouteflika's denunciations of the law, in combination with his comments regarding Sétif and gas ovens, colonialism and genocide, *harkis* and collaboration, made him the focus of much *pied-noir* anger, especially after January 2006. Véritas was not the only association to ascribe Chirac's veto to pressure from Algeria, although they were unique in demanding that the 'dictature chiraquienne' acting 'aux ordres du FLN' be indicted for treason on this basis. Joseph Hattab-Pacha, 'Démocratie adieu... Dictature bonjour!', *LV*, 100 (February 2006), 2

³⁶³ For a flavour of these polemics see issues 128, 138, 141, 142 and 144 of *PNM*.

their interaction with the *pied-noir* population. It would seem that in 1962, new borders were drawn not only on maps, but also between peoples. Thus in contrast to the harmonious pre-war melting pot of religions, ethnicities, and cultures, contemporary Algeria and its inhabitants are viewed by *pieds-noirs* as irrevocably ‘Other’ and depicted in overwhelmingly negative terms.³⁶⁴ Whereas *harkis* are classed as patriots and fellow *rapatriés* who represent the true soul of French Algeria, Algerians are equated to terrorists who irrevocably damaged France by waging a seditious guerrilla war that resulted in the amputation of these precious *départements*. Nowhere is the legitimacy of the Algerian people’s desire for independence acknowledged. Instead, the *pied-noir* focus remains resolutely on what they regard as acts of unprovoked violence perpetrated against them during the war.

Symptomatic of this is their reading of events in Paris on 17 October 1961. The official silence in the wake of this massacre, combined with an acceleration of violence, particularly in France, as the war drew to a close, including the death of nine Communists during an anti-OAS protest at the Charonne métro station on 8 February 1962, meant that 17 October 1961 largely disappeared from French public consciousness until the late 1990s. Its return to prominence has been largely due to the various unresolved controversies surrounding the night that continue to generate considerable and often acrimonious debate, including where responsibility for the violence lay and the exact numbers killed.³⁶⁵ Now a commemorative touchstone for the France-based Algerian community that attracts significant media coverage, this night has also been the subject of a range of *gestes officiels* from the French state, including a plaque dedicated ‘à la mémoire de nombreux Algériens tués lors de la sanglante répression de la manifestation pacifique du 17 octobre 1961’ unveiled on the Pont Saint Michel to mark the thirtieth anniversary.³⁶⁶ For *pied-noir* associations however, such attention represents a commemorative imbalance indicative of a wider pattern whereby the French government falls over itself to recognise the loss of life of subversive militants, while deliberately ignoring the deaths of thousands of patriotic Frenchmen and women in Algeria, including *harkis*. The argument of groups such as Véritas is that those who marched

³⁶⁴ The irony being that it was precisely the refusal to admit that Algeria was different to France that lay at the root of the repeated attempts to deny Algerian independence.

³⁶⁵ For further information on both the demonstration and its legacies see Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror and Memory*, (Oxford, 2006); Jean-Luc Einaudi, *La bataille de Paris: 17 octobre 1961*, (Paris, 1991); Jean-Paul Brunet, *Police contre le FLN: le drame d’octobre 1961*, (Paris, 1999); Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *Le 17 octobre 1961 - Un crime d’État à Paris*, (Paris, 2001).

³⁶⁶ However, even this very public gesture has its limits, particularly in the positioning of the plaque relative to the police headquarters and the lack of historical context and responsibility indicated by the wording. For further discussion of commemoration of 17 October 1961 see Joshua Cole, ‘Remembering the Battle of Paris: 17 October 1961 in French and Algerian Memory’, *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 21.3 (2003), 21-31; Brigitte Gaiti, ‘Les ratés de l’histoire: une manifestation sans suites: le 17 octobre 1961 à Paris’, *Sociétés Contemporaines*, 20 (December 1994), 11-37; Brigitte Jelen, ‘17 October 1961 – 17 October 2001 Une commémoration ambiguë’, *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 20.1 (2002), 30-45.

into the centre of Paris on 17 October were not peaceful civilians, but armed and dangerous enemies of the state. Therefore, not only was the actual loss of life far below what Jean Luc Einaudi claimed in his 'livre marxiste', but those deaths were entirely justified as part of a necessary law and order exercise against the FLN, a 'groupuscule terroriste en guerre contre la France'.³⁶⁷ Victim status is thus denied to the Algerians on the basis of their assumed political sympathies and is instead transferred to the *harkis* of Papon's FPA who, it is claimed, were fired upon first and who only at that point responded by bravely defending the nation's capital, indeed *their* nation's capital, as they had done in preceding weeks and months. Rallying against the practice of 'canaliser les terroristes', a counter-demonstration was thus organised by *pied-noir* associations to coincide with the unveiling of the Pont Saint Michel memorial. Singing 'C'est nous les Africains' and shouting slogans such as 'FLN assassins' and 'Où sont nos disparus?', *pied-noir* protestors demanded recognition for *all* FLN victims in France. To this end an alternative plaque was proposed:

À la mémoire des victimes françaises du FLN

De 1956 à 1962 en métropole

112 civils européens tués

597 civils européens blessés

50 policiers et militaires tués

396 policiers et militaires blessés.³⁶⁸

The similarities between 17 October 1961 and 26 March 1962 are striking: a peaceful, unarmed crowd protesting against the imposition of harsh restrictions on their movements is greeted with a disproportionate show of force by the French state and, as a result, many innocent civilians lose their lives. The event is then deliberately hushed up from on high creating a *devoir de mémoire* incumbent upon those who survived to make the truth about what happened known. Apart from the time of day, the following passage could equally have come from an account of the Battle of Paris: 'En ce beau lundi ensoleillé, une foule calme, digne où l'on sent passer le frisson de l'émotion, descend drapeaux en tête...Personne n'est armé, sinon de grebes des fleurs et de drapeaux'.³⁶⁹ Yet as far as *pied-noir* associations are concerned the different status of the 'victims' imbues the two occasions with entirely opposite meanings.

³⁶⁷ As with most declared *pied-noir* enemies, Einaudi is tarred with the brush of left-wing leanings. His character is further tainted by his association with Pierre Vidal Naquet, François Maspéro, Marcel Péju and 'toute l'équipe marxiste du Paris intellectuel'. Pierre Catin, 'Le prétendu 'massacre' des Algériens à Paris, le 17 octobre 1961', *LV*, 106 (October 2006), 4.

³⁶⁸ Nicole Ferrandis-Delaure, 'Le 17 octobre dernier à Paris', *FH*, 425-6 (September-October 2001),

10

³⁶⁹ 'La tragédie du 26 mars 1962. La rue d'Isly', *PNM*, 13 (March 1991), 26.

In addition to events during the war itself, the troubled state of independent Algeria is used by *pieds-noirs* to further justify their opposition to the end of the French empire. The argument that decolonisation has been, on balance, a complete failure, has been advanced consistently since 1962 in a range of guises. With respect to Algeria specifically, the rise of the Front islamique du salut (FIS), the extreme instability of the late 1990s and the large numbers of Algerians who continue to cross the Mediterranean in search of better prospects have only increased the *pieds-noirs*' certainty that their beloved country should never have been delivered into the incompetent and extremist hands of the FLN.³⁷⁰ In light of this, the fact that Algerians are welcomed onto French soil when the *terre* of the *pieds-noirs* is forbidden to them rankles greatly. If the *pieds-noirs* can no longer live in Algeria, then they see no reason why Algerians, these 'touristes ingrats', should be allowed to live in France, especially when the 'parasitic' nature of this immigrant presence is contrasted to the way in which the *pied-noir* community re-established themselves in the 1960s through their own hard work and in spite of a lack of governmental support.³⁷¹ As Francette Mendosa indignantly reminded her readers:

Sommes-nous devenus pour cela des délinquants? Non.

Avons-nous eu des associations caritatives pour nous épauler? Non

Avons-nous créé des marchés souterrains pour survivre? Non

Avons-nous brûlé des voitures?

Avons-nous attaqué la police? NON

Nous avons retroussé nos manches dans le but de nous en sortir, face à une partie de la population hostile à notre égard.³⁷²

These comments also highlight how developments such as the rise of the far right and the anti-racism movement of the 1980s have filtered into the rhetoric of *pied-noir* associations, producing an argument whereby the real victims of racism are identified not as immigrants and their descendants, but the *pieds-noirs*. 'Effectivement, le RACISME a commencé en 1962' noted Mendosa, but this passed unnoticed because such discrimination is 'une priorité frénétique' except when 'les victimes sont des Chrétiens et des Blancs'.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Among the innumerable articles advancing this view, a particularly good example is Michel Sanchez, 'Réflexion: Décolonisations bâclées: Histoire ou actualité?', *PNM*, 22 (January 1992), 26. This is however not an argument confined to either the *pied-noir* community, or to Algeria. As Flood and Frey point out, those with far right leanings have frequently assuaged their bitterness over the loss of the French Empire by deriving a perverse gratification from the decline in fortunes suffered by the independent territories, seeing in this vindication of their original stance. Flood and Frey, 'Defending the Empire', p.204.

³⁷¹ Francette Mendosa, 'Editorial', *EA*, 72 (March 2001), 3.

³⁷² Francette Mendosa, 'Editorial', *EA*, 91 (December 2003), 3. Emphasis in the original.

³⁷³ Francette Mendosa, 'Le mot de la Présidente', *EA*, 44 (December 1993), 3.

Although Mendosa is correct in seeing 1962 as an important turning point regarding the importation of new strands of racism into France, she incorrectly identifies the targets and the carriers. When discussing the pre-war era, associations are always quick to bring up personal anecdotes of interaction and friendship with specific Algerians as proof of *l'Algérie fraternelle*. However, these images co-exist with essentialist and highly stereotyped collective depictions of 'Arabs'. Éric Savarese describes it as 'le tragique d'une situation où les Arabes constituent, comme communauté, une menace contre la paix civile, tandis qu'individuellement ils sont insérés au quotidien chaleureux de chaque français d'Algérie'.³⁷⁴ In commentary on the post-war period the position of the 'bons Arabes' is filled by the *harkis*, leaving all other Algerians, indeed 'Arabs' in general, as part of the 'sale race'.³⁷⁵ What all these designations attest to is the persistence of a particular mentality that was transported from the colony to the mainland with the *pieds-noirs*. The development of anti-Maghrebin racism in France in the post-colonial period can therefore be viewed as an extension of colonial racism and thus as a 'sequel' to the wars of decolonisation, offering 'nostalgiques' the opportunity to 'reproduire le combat pour la même cause dans d'autres circonstances'.³⁷⁶ Bitterness over the outcome of the war is thus redirected, manifesting itself as hostility towards North Africans in France. The presence of immigrants in France fills these people with a 'nostalgic hate' writes Tahar Ben Jelloun, 'For them, attacking an Arabe is an indirect expression of the unassuaged grief they feel for the loss of "l'Algérie française"'.³⁷⁷ Evidence to support this contention is not hard to find with columns in *PNM* decrying the situation in France whereby 'la nation arabe revendique et obtient une justice à son goût: polygamie, abbatage rituel, groupes islamistes se développent au rythme de la forte nationalité dans des communautés'.³⁷⁸ Some associations even go so far as to claim that the change in migratory patterns, from temporary stints completed by single men on a rotational basis to permanent family-based settlement, represents 'colonisation à rebours'; that is, a deliberate attempt to culturally overwhelm France in revenge for the past.³⁷⁹ Véritas certainly perceives the continued arrival of Algerians as an 'envahissement' by 'une immigration nuisible qui croit que tout lui est dû ici'.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁴ Savarese, *La guerre*, p.119.

³⁷⁵ This has been particularly the case in the post 9/11 period when the 'War on Terror' has caused 'Arabs' to mutate into 'Islamists' in many *pied-noir* associations and journals. The content of *PNM*, especially once it resumed publication in 2003 after a hiatus of several years, explicitly reflects this trend, a fuller discussion of which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis.

³⁷⁶ Yvan Gastaut, 'Le racisme anti-maghrébin et les séquelles de la guerre d'Algérie', *H&M*, 1174 (March 1991), 35.

³⁷⁷ Tahar Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants*, (New York, 1999), p.45.

³⁷⁸ Jacky Pons, 'Tribune libre: La France prise en otage', *PNM*, 54 (February 1995), 6.

³⁷⁹ Flood and Frey, 'Defending the Empire', p.205.

³⁸⁰ Joseph Hattab Pacha, 'Le mot du Président', *LV*, 7 (November 1996), 2.

Nurtured in the supportive environment of the associational milieu, these beliefs have remained insulated from evolutions in intellectual and popular debates concerning the French empire. Essentially having never been decolonised, the *pieds-noirs* remain wedded to a perception of French Algeria that owes more to Fourth Republic propaganda than to reality. They are thus trapped in what Bancel, Blanchard, and Vergès identify as the ‘consensus colonial’ established in the inter-war period, which they claim was based upon ‘une déréalisation presque complète de l’acte [de colonisation] et la pratique’. This ‘fiction’ was especially powerful because it functioned as ‘le miroir d’une situation désirée pour la métropole elle-même’.³⁸¹ The contemporary end result is that the *pied-noir* community are increasingly at odds with mainstream sensibilities. This is evident not only in the continued promotion by associations of the benefits of the French presence overseas, but also in their dismissal of current attitudes to colonisation as overly determined by a false sense of guilt stemming from what they regard as the dominance of left-wing political correctness. The suppression of Article 4 was thus framed as an example of the ‘mea culpa perpétuel’ and ‘l’autoflagellation permanente’.³⁸² Indeed, the Cercle Algérieniste found it ‘idiot’ that French schools were inculcating ‘le sentiment de culpabilité’ in children by depicting ‘leur pays comme systématiquement responsable de spoliation, de torture et d’humiliation en Algérie’, while at the same time allowing ‘jeunes immigrés’ to acquire ‘la conviction qu’ils avaient une revanche à prendre sur la France pour ce qu’elle avait fait endurer à leurs parents’.³⁸³

As in all instances where *pied-noir* associations feel themselves and their history to be under attack, their response to the repentance debate has been to defend more rigorously their own position, which in reality means denying in more absolute terms all contrary viewpoints. To this end, during the 2003 ‘année de l’Algérie en France’, a petition signed by all the major *pied-noir* associations including the Cercle Algérieniste, ANFANOMA, RECOURS and Véritas, stated that while in principle the signatories ‘ne sont pas hostiles à l’établissement de relations apaisées avec l’Algérie’, in practice certain conditions first needed to be met; namely free circulation for *harkis* and acknowledgement by the FLN of their responsibility for the ‘masscares’ after 19 March 1962. Yet the associations were adamant in their ‘opposition la plus ferme à toute forme d’expression d’une quelconque repentance au nom de la France’ on the grounds that France had nothing to apologise for, having brought only beneficial change to Algeria.³⁸⁴ Such intractability can only serve to exacerbate the gap between the *pieds-noirs* and the rest of French society. Indeed, Stora has

³⁸¹ Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard and Françoise Vergès, *La République coloniale: essai sur une utopie*, (Paris, 2003), p.110.

³⁸² Jean-Marc Lopez, ‘Qu’est-ce-que la vérité historique?’, *PNM*, 137 (January 2006), 11; ‘Colonisation’, *PNM* 137 (January 2006), 12.

³⁸³ Évelyne Joyaux, ‘Des jeux mortels’, *L’Algérieniste*, 113 (March 2006), 6.

³⁸⁴ ‘Cette amitié qui ressemble à la haine’, *FH*, 466-467 (November-December 2005), 9.

noted that theirs 'is a memory which is hardening because it is disappearing and is no longer shared by the population as a whole', which risks leaving the community increasingly isolated within a historical orbit with fewer and fewer points of anchorage in the national historical narrative.³⁸⁵ Given that this is clearly where *pieds-noirs* would like to see their past inscribed, the conclusion seems unavoidable that although they have modified their tactics in light of the memory wars climate, this has not ultimately brought them any closer to victory. However, this situation is not attributable to external factors alone, internal characteristics specific to the *pied-noir* associational movement have also conspired to hinder the community's success as a memory carrier.

Internal Dimensions

'L'union avant tout'

In contrast to the view of Rosemary Averell Manes that 'each Pieds-Noirs association operates as a largely autonomous entity', the evidence presented thus far suggests that although each association has its own unique constituency, they do not operate in isolation.³⁸⁶ Instead, they form a dense network whose relations, so their spokespeople claim, are characterised by principles of mutual assistance and support that replicate the close communal ties of French Algeria. Advertising space is thus regularly devoted to other groups and events, while cross-fertilisation is further indicated through joint ventures, such as *rassemblements*, and by the existence of a common pool of contributors and contributions. Beyond the tendency to quote from the same canon of writers and their works, including Robert Randau, Jean Brune, and Albert Camus, one finds prominent activists like Jo Sohet, Pierre Goinard, Geneviève de Ternant, and Anne Cazal moving between publications, often having the same articles printed in a range of journals. Finally, skimming the 'Générique' section of the production notes for *pied-noir* dedicated debates reveals a consistent core cast including Jacques Roseau of RECOURS, Bernard Coll of Jeune pied-noir (JPN) and Christian Schembre originally of the Mouvement pied-noir deuxième génération and today leader of the Parti pied-noir (PPN). This interconnectedness is not a mere coincidence, but rather something that has been actively promoted from the outset. The first edition of *L'Algérieniste* opened with the declaration: 'Nous voulons affirmer notre identité, vivre comme nous l'entendons, fiers de notre passé et forts de nos liens fraternelles', while an early issue of

³⁸⁵ *Le Monde*, 6 July 2005, cited in Dunwoodie, 'Postface', 322.

³⁸⁶ Rosemary Averell Manes, *The Pieds-Noirs 1960-2000: A Case Study in the Persistence of Subcultural Distinctiveness*, (Bethesda, MD, 2005), p.111.

L'écho d'Oran placed a similar stress on the twin themes of 'solidarité' and 'amitié', reminding readers of the proverb:

Un pays battu, s'il se divise, est un pays qui meurt.

Un pays battu, s'il sait s'unir, est un pays qui renaît.³⁸⁷

Constant vigilance was deemed necessary since there were plenty of people outside the community who would seek to sow disunity for their own gains. Putting minor disagreements over race, religion, or ideology aside for the greater good of the community was presented as the only way to guarantee that the population would manage to survive as a collective entity and give their demands for recognition and recompense the best chance of obtaining satisfaction. When faced with a perceived external enemy, *pieds-noirs* seem naturally to adhere to this precept, instinctively banding together to defend themselves and their patrimony. For example, in spite of the tensions between their associations and styles of activism, Roseau and Bernard Coll joined forces to defend Roland Di Constanzo of the Union syndicale de défense des intérêts français repliés d'Algérie (USDIFRA), a group neither was well-disposed to, after he embarked upon an offensive and highly embarrassing denunciation of all *pied-noir* associations other than his own during an episode of the discussion show *Ciel mon mardi*.³⁸⁸ An on-camera defence of Di Constanzo was offered by Roseau and Coll who justified his anger as an inevitable consequence of the lack of opportunities afforded to *pieds-noirs* by the media to present their case. This was followed by a double-page autopsy conducted by *PNM* in which Roseau and Coll reiterated their support for 'notre ami' Roland whose 'émouvante and puissante intervention' had enabled the *pied-noir* community to 'donner une image plus forte, plus solidaire et encore plus puissante de celle-ci'.³⁸⁹ Such displays of solidarity are regarded as particularly important given the *désinformation* to which *pieds-noirs* are regularly subjected. Irreproachability is similarly valued with Maurice Calmein stressing that 'Notre comportement doit être aussi digne que ferme et prouver que, pour nous, des valeurs morales comme le sens de l'honneur, de la fraternité demeurent primordiales'.³⁹⁰ Acknowledging, however, that no community is perfect, strategies were proposed for dealing with the occasional 'brebis galeuses' whose behaviour risked 'de porter atteinte à l'ensemble des siens'.³⁹¹ Self-policing was thus advocated to bring any rogue elements back into line before they could tarnish the image projected to the outside world.

³⁸⁷ Maurice Calmein, 'L'Algérianisme an V', *L'Algérieniste*, 1, (15 December 1977), 3; 'Éditorial', *EO*, 10 (May 1965), 1.

³⁸⁸ 'Arlette Laguiller', *Ciel mon mardi*, 4 June 1991 (Channel 3).

³⁸⁹ Ibid; 'Les pieds-noirs Dechavanne sur TF1', *PNM*, 17 (July-August 1991), 46.

³⁹⁰ Maurice Calmein, 'Éditorial: L'union avant tout', *L'Algérieniste*, 12 (15 December 1980), 5.

³⁹¹ Ibid. 3.

Beyond the ‘band of brothers’ rhetoric, however, unity has proven elusive, certainly in terms of creating a single organisation accepted as representing the entire community. Although *pieds-noirs* recognise that they would be more powerful if combined into a single block, to date all unifying initiatives have failed. As one association president wrote, ‘Il y’a bien longtemps que les trop nombreux capitaines de nos innombrable navires ont cessé d’avoir une quelconque influence sur ce qui aurait pourtant pu être une puissante armada!’³⁹² This lack of success can largely be attributed to the internal rivalries that have plagued the *pied-noir* community since 1962. For behind the image of harmonious co-existence, a series of acrimonious conflicts have taken place over the past, the present, and the future. Although these pre-date the broader phenomenon of memory wars, the issues and the stakes are remarkably similar. *Pied-noir* associations battle both internal and external enemies in order to secure the right to speak on behalf of the Franco-Algerian past, and to be the only group to whom that right is accorded. It is believed that attaining such a position will allow them to ensure that it is their own version of the past which is to the fore and which will ultimately influence the national historical narrative in their favour. The internal wars concern a much smaller constituency, the *pied-noir* population as opposed to the entire French nation, but it is a more immediate and tangible collective, one whose commitment is overtly demonstrated through association adherence, journal subscriptions, and attendance at annual gatherings. Obtaining the allegiance of, or at least the microphone on behalf of, this community is often seen as the first step in the larger quest to see their historical interpretation prevail nationally. And, while not explicitly stated, it is also seen as a more realistic goal, at least in the short term. Although widely acknowledged among *pieds-noirs*, the French public were unaware of the tensions simmering beneath the apparently calm and unified surface of this community until 5 March 1993. On this date, Jacques Roseau of RECOURS was shot and killed by Gérard Huntz, Jean Claude Lozano and Marcel Navarro, three *pied-noirs* in their sixties who were all members of USDIFRA. When initially questioned by police, Huntz proudly situated his actions as the logical continuation of his former adherence to the OAS stating: ‘je suis un ancien de l’OAS et je le serais jusqu’à ma mort’. He went on to describe the attack in detail: ‘A hauteur de la vitre du conducteur, j’ai tiré coups de feu rapides. Cela avait une signification: trois coups de feu comme les trois lettres OAS. J’ai visé la tête’.³⁹³ His words were seized upon by the press who presented them as emblematic of a case that proved what many had long suspected, for certain people the Algerian War had never ended. The murder investigation and subsequent trial exposed the *pied-noir* community to national scrutiny, publicly highlighting for the first time the deep-seated rivalries embedded in the associational

³⁹² Maurice Calmein, ‘La trêve de mars’, *L’Algérieniste*, 41 (March 1988), 2.

³⁹³ Transcript of Huntz’s confession, cited in Emilien Jubineau, *L’enigme Roseau: La parole pied-noir assassinée*, (St Georges d’Orques:, 1997), pp.127-130.

movement. The assassination of Roseau thus serves as a useful prism through which to explore the internal dynamic of *pied-noir* activism and the implications of this in terms of the mobilisation and transmission of the past by associations.

‘L’ultime recours’

Roseau began his activist career during the war mobilising students in defence of French Algeria. Following brief stints in both the army and the OAS, he was ‘repatriated’ in 1962 where he continued to agitate, now on behalf of the newly exiled settlers, as part of various groups.³⁹⁴ By 1976, after more than a decade with little in the way of tangible gains to show for his efforts, Roseau came to the conclusion that the only way to make real progress was to form a pressure group to lobby at the highest political levels; the Rassemblement et coordination unitaires des rapatriés et spoilés (RECOURS) was born.³⁹⁵ The association’s strategy consisted of mobilising *pieds-noirs* to vote tactically in areas where they were numerically significant in order to pressure incumbent governments into acceding to their demands. This concept of the ‘elastic line’ was first put into practice in the 1977 municipal elections and produced several shock results in the form of majority candidates in the south losing their seats to the left. Continuing this practice for the next decade and at both ends of the political spectrum, by the 1986 legislative elections the association had lined up behind the RPR candidate for Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac. Following Chirac’s election to power, they were rewarded with a range of favourable measures including the 1987 indemnification law.³⁹⁶

Achievements such as these greatly raised the profile of Roseau and RECOURS, leading the press to bestow upon them the accolade ‘voice of the *pieds-noirs*’.³⁹⁷ Roseau had managed to make his organisation and himself *the* point of reference as far as those in power were concerned. The tributes paid across the political spectrum, from the head of the French Communist Party to Giscard d’Estaing, in the wake of his assassination testament to the fact that Roseau enjoyed contacts and influence at the highest levels. Even Chirac commented: ‘J’apprends avec une grande émotion la tragique disparition de Jacques Roseau. Cette personnalité genereuse, profondément dévoué à la cause des rapatriés et des harkis, avait beaucoup contribué à leur intégration au sein de notre communauté nationale’.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ Alongside campaigning, Roseau recounted his family’s history in two books: *Le 13e convoi*, (Paris, 1987) and *Le 113e été*, (Paris, 1991).

³⁹⁵ Roseau, Jacques, ‘Interview: J. Roseau L’enfant terrible de la communauté’, *PNM*, 16 (June 1991), 40.

³⁹⁶ Alain Rollat, ‘La preparation des élections législatives’, *Le Monde*, 12 February 1993, p.8; Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, pp.294-302.

³⁹⁷ *Droit de réponse*, aired 8 November 1986; Rollat, ‘La préparation’, p.8.

³⁹⁸ ‘Assassinat Roseau’, *IT1 20 heures*, aired 5 March 1993 (Channel 1).

Although the potential of this kind of selective block voting had long been recognised, RECOURS were the first to successfully capitalise on it. At first, many within the *pied-noir* community welcomed the new organisation, particularly following their early achievements ‘Je garde la conviction et je ne suis pas le seul si j’en crois les lettres que je reçois’, wrote one *pied-noir* activist, ‘que le peu de Justice qu’apporte la loi d’indemnisation [de 1987], c’est au RECOURS qu’on le doit’.³⁹⁹ This early enthusiasm soon gave way to an inverse relationship between the profile of RECOURS and its popularity within the *pied-noir* community, with Roseau described as someone whose ‘omniprésence médiatique irrite ou séduit, mais ne laisse pas indifférent’.⁴⁰⁰ Michel Pittard, one of the original founders of RECOURS, complained in an open letter to Roseau:

Vous présentez le RECOURS comme la plus importante association de Rapatriés, Laissez moi en douter! Vous prétendez d’autre part, que le RECOURS est le porte-parole de la communauté Rapatrié. C’est un abus de confiance! que vous pourriez au nom de votre association et de vos adhérents, c’est votre droit le plus absolu, mais vous n’avez aucune autorité pour parler au nom de l’ensemble des Rapatriés.⁴⁰¹

Tied into these criticisms were often accusations that RECOURS had become elitist and out of touch, simply a ‘personal tribune’ for Roseau.⁴⁰² In proving that it was possible for the *pieds-noirs* to have an influential voice and by embodying that voice in themselves, RECOURS attained a status that many other groups coveted for themselves and resented anyone else possessing.

‘La porte-serviette de Chirac’

However, it was not just RECOURS’ status that aroused anger, but also their policies. The association’s most contentious measure was supporting Chirac given his Gaullist associations. When *PNM* grilled Roseau on this new political position, he defended it on pragmatic grounds arguing: ‘Je suis pas du tout gaulliste. Je suis foncièrement anti-gaulliste. ...nous soutenons des candidats ayant le label “ami des rapatriés” et les plus à même d’aider les

³⁹⁹ Marcel Bellier, ‘Deux mois après’, *EO*, 136 (May 1978), 1.

⁴⁰⁰ Roseau, ‘Interview’, 40.

⁴⁰¹ Michel Pittard, ‘Lettre ouverte à M. Jacques Roseau’, *EO*, 205 (November-December 1989), 4.

⁴⁰² René Blanchot, ‘CNSR: L’après Roseau’, *PNM*, 36 (June-July 1993), 43. Such criticisms were not confined to the *pied-noir* community with *harki* activist Boussad Azni accusing RECOURS of exploiting the *harkis* for their own gains. See, *Harkis, crime d’État: Généalogie d’un abandon*, (Paris, 2002), p.129.

rapatriés sur le plan parlementaire ou local...C'était un appel à voter utile'.⁴⁰³ Yet for many this was an unacceptable ideological compromise and a betrayal of the past, irrespective of the material benefits it might bring. Denounced for similar historical reasons was Roseau's advocacy of co-operation between the *pied-noir* community and the FLN-dominated Algerian government in order to aid development and combat the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. For Roseau, defending the interests of the displaced settlers did not entail renouncing his attachment to the land from which they had been exiled, nor his desire to see an independent Algeria prosper; as he told one interviewer, 'L'amour emporte toujours sur la haine'.⁴⁰⁴ Such opinions were not widely shared within the *pied-noir* community, as Lozano's comments indicate: 'Nous reprochions à Roseau son rapprochement avec l'Algérie et le gouvernement du FLN, quand je dis 'nous', cela veut dire 85% des rapatriés'.⁴⁰⁵ In sum therefore Roseau was charged with betraying the *pièdes-noirs* by 'forgetting' the past too quickly. As Huntz told police, 'Il voulait effacer l'histoire algérienne. Je ne pouvais l'accepter'.⁴⁰⁶

One of Roseau's most implacable critics was Eugène Ibagnes of USDIFRA, an association long noted for its radical views, strong-arm tactics, and murky connections to the far right. This dislike was, however, mutual with Roseau frequently denouncing the extremism he believed organisations such as USDIFRA were engendering amongst the *pièdes-noirs*. The situation of open warfare between the two groups only intensified following the public début of the Conseil national supérieur des rapatriés (CNSR) in July 1991. Also headed by Ibagnes, this new attempt to unify the disparate *pied-noir* associations was dismissed by Roseau as inconsequential, to which Ibagnes responded that Roseau was simply 'La porte-serviette de Chirac'.⁴⁰⁷

In light of this acrimonious history, members of the RECOURS entourage were quick to point the finger at USDIFRA in 1993, citing in particular Ibagnes' openly stated ambitions to become *pied-noir* spokesperson. However, beyond the membership of the three assassins, no concrete link was ever proven between USDIFRA and Roseau's death. The connection between USDIFRA and the far right proved equally difficult to pin down in any legal sense, although Ibagnes notoriously welcomed Jean-Marie Le Pen onto his property for a *méchoui* in support of the three incarcerated suspects on 23 November 1993. Yet for many commentators both organisations had Roseau's blood on their hands; the coincidence of timing between the

⁴⁰³ Roseau, 'Interview', 40. In 1993, Roseau turned down an offer to stand as RPR candidate for the Hérault region on the grounds that he preferred to maintain his autonomy, although there were rumours at the time of his death that he had accepted an advisory post within Chirac's government.

⁴⁰⁴ Interview with Roseau in Maurice Peyrot, 'Trois anciens de l'OAS comparaissent devant la cour d'assises de l'Hérault pour le meurtre de Jacques Roseau', *Le Monde*, 10 December 1996, p.10.

⁴⁰⁵ Lozano cited in Jubineau, *L'enigme Roseau*, p.142.

⁴⁰⁶ Huntz cited in Ibid. p.127.

⁴⁰⁷ This exchange was recalled by Ibagnes in the course of his police interview following the assassination, cited in Ibid. p.89.

National Front's first electoral successes in the South and the launch of USDIFRA's offensive against Roseau being too striking for commentators to ignore.⁴⁰⁸

Roseau was very much a thorn in Le Pen's side due to his consistent public opposition to the FN, with one journalist describing him as 'l'obstacle numéro un à la stratégie du FN vis-à-vis des pieds-noirs'.⁴⁰⁹ According to former USDIFRA lawyer René Blanchot the fractures within the *pied-noir* community developed in tandem with the rise of the FN. When the FN was weak the *pieds-noirs* largely ignored Le Pen, preferring to give their votes to more powerful and established parties, however, as the FN grew in strength they appeared increasingly attractive to the *pieds-noirs*.⁴¹⁰ In fighting for the attention of the *rapatrié* community, Le Pen considered Roseau to be his rival and enemy. Upon hearing of his death, Le Pen remarked that 'un crime est un crime et doit être puni mais je n'avais pas d'estime pour Jacques Roseau'.⁴¹¹ The flip side of the coin was that the growing influence of the FN threatened to undermine RECOURS' claim to represent the entire *pied-noir* community. In the ensuing battles for the loyalty of the *pieds-noirs*, the past increasingly encroached upon the present, re-igniting the embers of bitterness that had continued to smoulder within certain segments of the community since 1962. Thus for journalist Philippe Bernard, 'c'est avec la montée du Front national...que les fantômes de l'OAS et de ses "soldats perdus" refont véritablement leur apparition dans la vie de Jacques Roseau'.⁴¹²

'La dernière victime de la guerre d'Algérie'?

Does this make Roseau, as the press were quick to claim, 'la dernière victime de la guerre d'Algérie'?⁴¹³ Much of the commentary in this vein stemmed from Huntz's initial confession which concluded with the defiant assertion: 'Je tiens à préciser que c'est un acte politique. Je souhaite que l'OAS continue à vivre pour faire un barrage efficace à l'intégrisme qui menace la France et ses enfants. Vive la France et l'OAS'.⁴¹⁴ Such comments led many to ask why, thirty years on, 'la guerre d'Algérie continue dans l'esprit de certains pieds-noirs, nourrissant une haine capable d'abattre un homme'?⁴¹⁵ One answer relates to the sudden and traumatic manner in which Algeria became independent. The settlers believed so absolutely that Algeria was part of France and were so confident that the might of the French army would prevail

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid. p.300.

⁴⁰⁹ Alain Rollat interviewed by Jubineau. Ibid. p.301.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. p.227.

⁴¹¹ 'Factuel Roseau', *IT1 13 heures*, aired 6 March 1993 (Channel 1).

⁴¹² Philippe Bernard, 'Jacques Roseau, de l'OAS à l'OAS', *Le Monde*, 9 April 1993, p.1.

⁴¹³ This was the headline in *Le Figaro* the day after the announcement that the Roseau case would go to trial.

⁴¹⁴ 'Procès verbal no. 93/129, 7 avril 1993' cited in Jubineau, *L'enigme Roseau*, p.130.

⁴¹⁵ Bernard, 'Jacques Roseau', p.1.

over a small band of poorly armed rebels that they simply could not comprehend the eventual outcome of the war. This, in conjunction with the terror and violence of the final few months and the subsequent trauma of the exodus, had an immensely destabilising effect upon the *pieds-noirs* and their worldview; a shock from which some never recovered. However, others ascribed more personal motivations to the assassins, suggesting that all three were seeking to become, in the eyes of their community, the heroes they had failed to be when members of the OAS.⁴¹⁶ All commentaries, however, concurred that here were three individuals whose lives had stopped in 1962 and never recommenced. Haunted and obsessed by the past, unable to move forward and look to the future, for these men the Algerian War had never really ended. Huntz's daughter described her father as a man imbued to the point of paralysis with nostalgia, stating that conversations 'reveinrent toujours sur ce pays. Il a ressenti le rapatriement comme un trahison, la perte d'une identité', while Lozano told the police, 'nous avons tout perdu, notre terre, la mer, le soleil, notre patrie, c'est pour ça qu'il n'y aura jamais d'oubli'.⁴¹⁷

Consequently, by the time the court case opened in December 1996, it was being hyped as the 'the last trial of French Algeria'. Confirming the trend towards the increasing judicialisation of history, people were keen to see this not as a simple murder trial, but as an opportunity to render judgement on the history of French Algeria and the War of Independence in much the same vein as was hoped for with the concurrently unfolding Papon trial. As one commentator remarked:

L'assassinat de Jacques Roseau? Le jugement des trois hommes? le procès ne doit pas se limiter à cela. C'est l'histoire de l'Algérie qu'ils attendent voir comparaître...Pour eux, rien d'autre n'est expiatoire. Si justice il y a, elle doit être rendue sur cette sale guerre d'Algérie, sur ses acteurs et ses auteurs.⁴¹⁸

Ibagnes also sought, with significantly less eloquence, to turn the trial into a wider condemnation of French actions in Algeria, telling the press outside the court: 'Les responsables, les bâtards, n'ont qu'à payer. Ce ne sont pas ces trois individus, victimes d'un coup de folie. C'est le procès de la France qu'on va faire. On va remonter à la Seconde Guerre mondiale!'⁴¹⁹

It was always optimistic to think that seventy-six hours of debate could erase thirty four years of bitterness, eight years of war, and one hundred and thirty years of colonisation,

⁴¹⁶ Jubineau, *L'enigme Roseau*, pp.235, 318.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. pp.281, 184.

⁴¹⁸ Jubineau, *L'enigme Roseau*, p.277.

⁴¹⁹ Ibagnes cited in Jacqueline Remy, 'Le dernier procès de l'Algérie française', *L'Express*, 5 December 1996, p.47.

but trial observers were to be further disappointed by the fact that Huntz, Lozano and Navarro proved completely unequal to the task of historically redeeming the *Algérie française* cause.⁴²⁰ The three men who entered the dock in 1996 were a far cry from the defiant orators of April 1993, their infirmities underlined by a particularly sharp-tongued journalist who wrote of Lozano, Huntz, and Navarro respectively: 'Le premier est à demi aveugle, le second perclus d'arthrose, et troisième n'a pas beaucoup de cervelle: c'est le procès de trois papys qui se sont pris pour Zorro'.⁴²¹ Retracting their initial confessions, all three men were now arguing that far from a deliberate political statement on behalf of an ever-vigilant OAS, the assassination had been an 'une malencontreuse bavure'.⁴²² Therefore, instead of the grand historical justifications they were expecting, trial observers were greeted with three virtually silent defendants whose 'ideology', it quickly became apparent, was limited to the rote repetition of a formula of second hand accusations, causing *Le Point* to write that Roseau had done more to defend the three men in the course of his activism than they did for themselves in court.⁴²³ Huntz, Lozano, and Navarro were thus transformed from fanatical combatants in an unfinished war, to three old fools blinded by petty jealousies and frustration at their own failures in life who had submerged themselves in bitter nostalgia to the point of committing an absurd crime.

It would therefore seem that rather than the last victim of the Algerian War, Roseau was the first high profile victim of the memory of the conflict. He was essentially killed for his ideas and because those ideas were increasingly at odds with the dominant interpretation of the past espoused by the *pied-noir* community, particularly amidst the heightened commemorative climate of the 1990s. Contrary to the criticisms of USDIFRA *et al*, it was never true that Roseau had 'forgotten' the Algerian War, for if he had surely he would not still have been campaigning on behalf of his compatriots. He furthermore always used the public platforms he was given to highlight issues close to *pied-noir* hearts such as refuting the stereotype of the *gros colon*, stressing the fraternal nature of colonial Algeria, and criticising the lack of governmental attention paid to the *rapatrié* community.⁴²⁴ In many ways Roseau epitomised *pied-noiritude*, giving it an articulate, well-connected, and charismatic persona.

⁴²⁰ Jubineau, *L'enigme Roseau*, p.345.

⁴²¹ Remy, 'Le dernier procès', p.47.

⁴²² All three stated that they had planned to approach Roseau on 5 March 1993 only 'de lui mettre une correction, une bonne raclée'. They were armed, they claimed, only because they believed that Roseau carried a gun. Trial transcripts for Huntz cited in Jubineau, *L'engime Roseau*, p.174.

⁴²³ 'Le procès de l'absurde', *Le Point*, 21 December 1996, p.21.

⁴²⁴ See, for example, his comments during *Droit de réponse*, aired 8 November 1986; 'Spécial guerre d'Algérie', aired 8 October 1991; 'Algérie: mémoires d'une guerre', *Caractères*, aired 22 November 1991 (Channel 3).

Upon being asked what he would like to drink during an interview, he quipped that he would like a mineral water, although ‘Pas d’Evian, s’il vous plait!’⁴²⁵

The fundamental problem was that Roseau sought to combine his activism with a desire to move on and look to the future. In contrast to his killers’ obsession with the past, Roseau, in one of the last interviews he gave, stated ‘Il faut savoir tourner la page sans la déchirer’. He went on to speak of his ‘bitterness’ over the conclusion of the war, but also his determination to ‘ne pas vivre sur une éternelle colère’.⁴²⁶ He thus sought to preserve the past without becoming trapped by it. By this point, Roseau had proven himself possessed of a nuanced historical sensibility that enabled him to acknowledge the achievements, but also the flaws, of colonial Algeria. He was furthermore willing to engage in dialogue with those traditionally classed as ‘enemies’ and, as the consummate politician, knew when principles should give way to pragmatism, something epitomised by his recognition that it was counterproductive to refuse to co-operate with Chirac’s administration on the basis of a historical grudge when there were real gains to be made.

This practical attitude was, however, increasingly at odds with the static black and white worldview of many *pieds-noirs*. For such people, Roseau’s words and deeds violated sacred historical principles, while his personal prominence and the influence this afforded him at the highest levels rubbed further salt into the community’s unhealed wounds. The tragic result was, as one historian put it, ‘Il n’incarnait pas leur vision de l’Algérie française et il en est mort’.⁴²⁷ Even before his assassination, the *pied-noir* community had begun to respond to these perceived betrayals by turning its back on Roseau and RECOURS. This is evident from the growing frequency with which criticisms were voiced in *pied-noir* journals such as *France-Horizon* which ran a piece five months before Roseau’s death criticising him for ‘Prétendant encore représenter une communauté qu’il a renié dans son ensemble’.⁴²⁸ Roseau, branded as a rogue element and a traitor to the values and history of the *pieds-noirs*, was therefore reprimanded, firstly in print and finally physically.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁵ Philippe Bernard, ‘Après la mort du porte-parole du RECOURS-France’, *Le Monde*, 9 March 1993, p.15.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. p.15.

⁴²⁷ Valérie Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés d’Afrique du Nord de 1956 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2007), p.364.

⁴²⁸ Yves Sainsot, ‘Gardons-nous des panurge...’, *FH*, 336 (November 1992), 24.

⁴²⁹ Jean-Marc Lopez, ‘Le Recours-France vient de perdre son porte-parole’, *PNM*, 35 (April 1993), 13. In light of this it is interesting that Roseau’s death received very little commentary from *pied-noir* associations themselves, possibly demonstrating their self-policing ethos in practice. The exception to this was *PNM* where the reprimands of Roseau continued posthumously.

‘Le désert’

The assassination of Jacques Roseau demonstrates that memory wars are an internally as well as externally directed trend within the *pied-noir* community. The importance of the past to individual *pieds-noirs*, not least because of what it said about them in the present, made it of importance to those seeking to represent them at the highest levels. Fidelity to both history and memory was perceived as vital for legitimating claims to incarnate the image and values of the community. As a consequence, associations such as USDIFRA extensively exploited the past in order to gain adherents and discredit rivals. The irony is that despite these high stakes and the ambitions of the actors involved the position of *pied-noir* spokesperson has remained vacant since Roseau’s death. In fact, the evidence suggests that rather than a divisive figure, Roseau was ‘une source de référence dans une communauté en proie à d’infinies “chicayas”’.⁴³⁰ As his cousin Gilbert confessed, ‘Derrière Roseau, soyons honnête, c’est le désert’.⁴³¹

The disparate nature of the *pied-noir* population meant that unity was always going to be difficult to attain and maintain. In the absence of an illusionist of Roseau’s skill, the natural tendency towards heterogeneity has accelerated. The memory wars of the late 1990s might have produced greater harmony in terms of historical discourses as attitudes have hardened across associations, but this has rarely been translated into collective practical action and never into a single cross-association leader.⁴³² Although rhetorically it is still the *pieds-noirs* as a whole who are addressed by associations in their literature, in truth they really only speak to a dwindling core of their own particular supporters. USDIFRA has been unable to shake off its extremist label and remains confined to the margins of the *pied-noir* community, while the circulation figures for *PNM* dropped so low that they were forced to suspend publication between September 2000 and November 2003. Even RECOURS has struggled without Roseau, their membership figures down from a peak of 60,000 in the 1980s to less than 10,000 in the mid 1990s. Only Le Pen has continued to go from strength to strength, but that is the result of factors far beyond Roseau and the scope of this discussion. In terms of the wider significance of Roseau’s death, even though it happened fifteen years ago, the issues surrounding it have lived on and are today playing a major role in contemporary France. What *pied-noir* associations were arguing over, and indeed continue to argue over,

⁴³⁰ Rollat, ‘Jacques Roseau’, p.8.

⁴³¹ Gilbert Roseau cited in Jubineau, *L’enigme Roseau*. p.19.

⁴³² Efforts have however continued in this vein, most recently in the form of the CNFA created in the wake of the abrogation of the 23 February 2005 law. Supported by the Cercle Algérieniste and *PNM* amongst others, its stated objective is ‘la mise en commun de nos moyens respectifs, afin d’opposer à nos détracteurs en tout genre la réplique qui convient, avec toute la rumeur dont notre communauté est capable si elle s’organise et se rassemble’. Jean-Marc Lopez, ‘11 février une date à retenir’, *PNM* 138 (February 2006), 5.

mirrors what is being fought over nationally in the current *guerres de mémoire*. It is about who has the authority to interpret the past and thus the power to influence its commemoration at the highest levels. In the absence of a broad and sustained consensus on this issue, the *pied-noir* community, while still able to unify in opposition to external events such as loi 2005-185, seem destined to remain deeply fractured internally as illustrated by the bitter inter-association squabbles over the recently inaugurated *mur des disparus* in Perpignan.

On 18 December 1996, Gérard Huntz and Jean Claude Lozano were condemned to twenty years in prison; Marcel Navarro received a slightly reduced sentence of fifteen years. Given their advanced age and poor health, all three are likely to die in prison. Two years previously, on 5 March 1994, the first anniversary of his death, Roseau was immortalised in stone in Montpellier. A three hundred strong crowd gathered to witness the inauguration of a memorial inscribed with the words of another famous Algerian son, Camus: 'Je comprends ici ce que l'on appelle gloire, le droit d'aimer sans mesure'.⁴³³ Yet although Roseau's legacy seems assured, that of the community he campaigned tirelessly on behalf of remains far less certain.

⁴³³ Philippe Bernard and Jacques Monin, 'Le 5 mars 1993: Trois pieds-noirs sous influence pour un crime mal éclairci', *Le Monde*, 8 March 1994, p.11.

4. Transmission: The Next Generation

‘Demain, nous en serons les héritiers’

‘Que serait un homme sans mémoire? Que serait un pays sans mémoire? ... C’est la mémoire vivante qui fait le présent et le présent porte en lui l’avenir’.⁴³⁴ This philosophy, outlined by Hélié de Saint Marc, lies at the heart of *pied-noir* associations. In addition to the past and the present, the future has long been a *pied-noir* preoccupation. Underpinned by their fear of forgetting and thus of being forgotten, the subject is most frequently discussed under the rubric of ‘transmission’; the need to pass the patrimonial torch to the next generation. As early as 1977, the newly-created Cercle Algérieniste was exhorting its adherents to remember: ‘Notre action présente et notre passé ne doivent pas disparaître avec les générations actuelles. Nous devons donc en laisser des traces visibles mais également préparer nos enfants à prendre la relève’.⁴³⁵ Today, association responses to the question ‘Qu’est-ce que vous pensez et espérez que l’avenir tiendra pour votre association?’ frequently refer to the hope that their activities will be carried on by ‘nos enfants, voire petits enfants’.⁴³⁶ ‘Les générations à venir ne doivent pas l’oublier’ General Jouhaud explained, ‘Il ne faut pas qu’ils ignorent le drame de leurs parents, comme ne doit pas leur échapper le sens de notre combat’.⁴³⁷ This imperative is given a particular sense of urgency by the knowledge that the more time passes, the more the troops of the first generation diminish - Jouhaud himself died in 1995 - and the greater the need becomes to replenish the ranks of active combatants with fresh recruits. Failure to successfully transmit the past would have serious consequences for the *pied-noir* community as Jean-Luc Morin highlighted when he asked: ‘Demain, nous en serons les héritiers. Faudra-t-il nous contenter de jouer les exécuteurs testamentaires?’⁴³⁸

In response to this perceived danger, some associations established explicit structures to safeguard the community’s heritage such as the Cercle Algérieniste’s Mouvement jeunesse Algérieniste (MJA), founded in 1979, which proudly declared ‘Algériens français nous serons désormais’.⁴³⁹ It is also common to find associations using the highly potent *devoir de mémoire* to elicit an ongoing commitment to preserving the past. In practical terms Maurice Calmein outlined what fulfilling this duty would entail for future activists:

⁴³⁴ Cited in Peter Batty, *La guerre d’Algérie*, (Paris, 1989), p.164.

⁴³⁵ Maurice Calmein, ‘Appellation contrôlée’, *L’Algérieniste*, (1977), 10.

⁴³⁶ Jean Scotto, Cercle Algérieniste des Pyrénées Orientales, questionnaire response.

⁴³⁷ Général Edmond Jouhaud, ‘Congrès de Tours’, *L’Algérieniste*, 5.2 (15 March 1978), 44.

⁴³⁸ Jean-Luc Morin, ‘Lettre ouverte aux jeunes pieds-noirs’, *L’Algérieniste*, 22 (15 June 1983), iii.

⁴³⁹ Marc Ribes-Rotage, ‘Mouvement jeunesse Algérieniste’, *L’Algérieniste*, 8 (15 December 1979), 51.

Il faut leur entretenir la flamme et conserver tout ce qui peut être de ce passé qui est celui de leurs familles mais aussi de la nation française. Il leur faut entretenir les traditions, les fêtes, le langage, le folklore, mais aussi le souvenir des dates symboliques de cette histoire belle et tragique.⁴⁴⁰

Through these activities, the intention is to transmit a positively evaluated historical legacy so that those born after the war and in France can ‘dire sans honte ou sans le cacher: “Je suis un descendant de Pieds-Noirs, de pionniers bâtisseurs d’un pays”’.⁴⁴¹ By creating a sense of pride regarding the past it is hoped that subsequent generations will be motivated to actively defend and perpetuate this patrimony. According to this logic any disjuncture between generations can be overcome by the notion of an emotional and historical continuum that creates a single, unbroken lineage from the first settlers, whose roots were firmly planted in the soil of French Algeria, to the present day diaspora community. For the Jeunes Algérienistes, their place in the *pied-noir* genealogy and the responsibilities this involved were clear:

Nous sommes les enfants de l’exode...

Nous sommes pourtant pieds-noirs...

Nous sommes dépositaires devant l’avenir...

Nous sommes, nous aussi, les descendants spirituels...

Nous nous réclamons de l’Algérianisme.⁴⁴²

Alongside the Jeunes Algérienistes, several other *pied-noir* descendants have shown themselves keen to take up their communal obligations with respect to the past. In an impassioned article, Anne-Véronique Mendosa reassured her ancestors that ‘je suis fière de votre histoire, de mon histoire, pour ne pas l’oublier, je l’ai gravée dans ma mémoire’.⁴⁴³ However, Mendosa’s devotion to the *pied-noir* cause needs to be placed in the context of her status as the daughter of the president of the Amicale des Enfants de l’Algérois, and as someone who grew up immersed in her parents’ past: ‘Je vivais avec eux leur vie “là-bas”, j’apprenais à connaître à travers leurs paroles mes Anciens, je refaisais avec eux la traversée tragique de la Méditerranée...’⁴⁴⁴ However, in a questionnaire circulated by the Cercle Algérieniste in 1984 designed to gauge the relationship between ‘la jeunesse’ and the wider

⁴⁴⁰ Maurice Calmein, *Dis, c’était comment, l’Algérie française? 20 questions et réponses à l’intention des jeunes Pieds Noirs*, (Friedberg/Bayern, 2002), p.71.

⁴⁴¹ ‘Edito: Le défi médiatique’, *PNM* 12 (February 1991), 5.

⁴⁴² ‘Manifesto des jeunes Algérienistes’, *L’Algérieniste*, 28 (15 December 1984), ii.

⁴⁴³ Anne-Véronique Mendosa, ‘L’Age de l’indépendance’, *EA*, 10 (November 1984), 4.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 2.

pied-noir community, the inclusion of negative options such as ‘Tu regrettes toute discussion sur un sujet [la guerre] qui t’ennuie, parce que tu ne te sens pas concerné’, implies that there was a fear that not all *jeunes* were committed activists in the Mendosa mould. Indeed, respondents could assert that they felt they had nothing in common with other young *pieds-noirs* beyond ‘un hazard historique dépasse par l’histoire elle même’.⁴⁴⁵

Of course there has already been one successful inter-generational transfer of memory, since today’s spokespeople are generally of a different generation to the men and women who led associations in the immediate aftermath of the war.⁴⁴⁶ Not only is this understandable given that it is now more than forty-five years since the war ended, it also helps to explain the change in focus from material to commemorative concerns which paralleled the emergence of these new activists. Furthermore, this was not experienced as a dramatic rupture because both cohorts possessed the common denominators of having lived in French Algeria and lived through the identity-forming exodus of 1962. In fact so smooth has this transfer of power been that it has almost gone unnoticed. ‘Disons que les liens entre la première et la seconde génération était encore fort (sic)’ writes Jean Scotto, ‘la transmission s’est bien effectuée’. When it came to the third generation however, relations were more ‘distendus’ rendering the transition problematic.⁴⁴⁷ This group is more ambiguous as a potential repository of the *pied-noir* past for several reasons, the most important of which is that they were born after 1962 and therefore never knew French Algeria. As the second generation fades into the background and the task falls to the next generation to succeed them at the head of associations, the awkward issue arises of how to legitimate these people as carriers of a memory that is not their own and which pertains to a past that they have no direct experience of.

In one sense, the *pieds-noirs* are victims of their own success. In spite of their protests to the contrary, empirically the community has completely integrated into French society meaning that whether measured in terms of physical appearance, cultural practices or socio-economic status, *pied-noir* children are not visibly distinguishable from other French children.⁴⁴⁸ Given the centrality of distinctiveness to the *pied-noir* discourse, this naturally has consequences in terms of the depth of attachment the third generation feel to a temporally and culturally distanced era and its survivors, as opposed to the land where they have grown up.

⁴⁴⁵ ‘Un appel du Secrétariat national à la jeunesse’, *L’Algérieniste*, 27 (September 1984), xv. The results of the survey were not reported in subsequent issues.

⁴⁴⁶ There are some exceptions to this such as Francette Mendosa who has led the Amicale des Enfants de l’Algérois since its inception in 1980, or Joseph Hattab Pacha of Véritas who, despite only founding the association in 1996, is a former Mayor of the Algiers Casbah.

⁴⁴⁷ Jean Scotto, Cercle Algérieniste des Pyrénées Orientales, questionnaire response.

⁴⁴⁸ For a more detailed discussion of this see Clarisse Buono, ‘Les Pieds Noirs et leurs descendants: Les difficultés de transmission d’une identité collective singulière’ in *La différence culturelle: Une reformulation des débats*, ed. by Michel Wieviorka and Jocelyn Ohana, (Paris, 2001), p.282.

However, far more significant than the practical aspects of integration are the actions of the community itself, particularly the paradigms upon which the second generation have built their collective memorial heritage. The past is a commodity that the *pied-noir* community guards jealously and exclusively:

Tant comme les Français d'Algérie avaient eu l'illusion que le pays colonisé était leur propriété, et ressentaient les interventions de la France comme un intrusion, les pieds-noirs semblent estimer que la France ne peut écrire l'Histoire de l'Algérie puisque eux seuls l'a (sic) connaissent et l'ont vécu.⁴⁴⁹

Unfortunately, by virtue of the tactics associations have employed, the category of 'la France' has inadvertently come to include their own descendants. The problem, as outlined by Bueno, is that 'les nostalgiques' have 'confié leurs souvenirs – et non la mémoire – à leurs enfants'.⁴⁵⁰ This has been exacerbated by the increasing importance placed on witness testimony as the best weapon through which to combat competing interpretations as part of the current memory wars. By making lived experience the touchstone of authenticity *pied-noir* associations have effectively created a transmission cul-de-sac, leaving themselves vulnerable to the collective memory curse of the shelf-life first outlined by Maurice Halbwachs. This risks a scenario in which 'le dernier 'Européen' né en Algérie à la veille de l'indépendance sera aussi le dernier pied-noir'.⁴⁵¹

As far as most *pied-noir* associations are concerned, the blame for the present situation lies firmly with an uninterested third generation who have neglected their *devoir de mémoire*. 'Difficiles les liens avec les générations suivantes' wrote one association, 'Ils ont d'autres centres d'intérêt, d'autres chats à fouetter'.⁴⁵² Bueno's interviews with current community leaders revealed similar sentiments, yet when she questioned members of the third generation she found that there *was* interest in their parents' past and a desire to participate in its preservation. However, this desire was frequently frustrated by the stringent conditions of belonging established by associations.⁴⁵³ The third generation are thus placed in the unenviable position of being exhorted to fulfil their commemorative duty, while simultaneously being denied full access to the very organisations that would enable them to do so because they lack the 'open sesame' of having lived through the war and exile. Rather than a deliberate policy, this exclusion is more an unappreciated by-product of the way in

⁴⁴⁹ Clarisse Bueno, *Pieds-noirs de père en fils*, (Paris, 2004), p.75.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. p.158. For Bueno's full typology of 'nostalgiques' see pp.101-104.

⁴⁵¹ Michèle Baussant, 'Identité passagère: Pied-noir, une figure de l'exil', in *La guerre d'Algérie dans la mémoire et l'imaginaire*, ed. by Anny Dayan Rosenmann and Lucette Valensi, (Paris, 2004), 116.

⁴⁵² Marie-Claire Micouleau-Sicault, *Mémoire d'Afrique du Nord*, questionnaire response.

⁴⁵³ Bueno, *Pieds-noirs*, pp.96-97.

which the expression of *pied-noir* collective memory has evolved. The end result, however, is the same: deprived of the credentials of lived experience, 'Ils seront algérianistes qu'à un degré moindre'.⁴⁵⁴

The *pieds-noirs* have always maintained that transmitting the past is not simply about conveying facts; it is about breathing life into them and thus making history meaningful to the next generation. This is the only way to ensure a commitment to its perpetuation and to avoid ossification of the kind foretold by Louis Grossard when he asks: 'L'Algérianisme, ne sera-t-il plus qu'un musée poussiéreux, l'histoire d'un intermède pittoresque et touchant et, pour d'autres, agaçant?'⁴⁵⁵ Although this is a problem faced by all memory-carriers, it is rendered particularly acute for *pied-noir* by their insistence on tying legitimacy and authority to first hand experience. As awareness of this problem has grown, various solutions have been advanced premised on an accommodation of different forms of remembering according to generation. ANFANOMA, for example, proposed the idea of mutually compatible rather than mutually exclusive notions of belonging whereby the third generation 'peut être considérée comme fondue dans la société métropolitaine tout en gardant une attaché forte à ce que nous représentons'.⁴⁵⁶ This approach was supported by Yves Clement who argued that 'être pied-noir ne dépend pas d'un lieu de naissance, mais du devoir de revendiquer un héritage de pionnier, de respecter le labour de ses aïeux et de défendre la vérité'.⁴⁵⁷ Whether this new form of identification with the past can be put into practice is another matter. On the one hand, the *pieds-noirs* have survived one generational transfer and a re-orientation of priorities from the material to the moral. On the other hand, particularly in recent years, the flexibility and willingness to adapt seems to be diminishing as the escalating memory wars not only rigidifies the community and its adherents, but increasingly isolates them within a historical and memorial discourse divorced from mainstream attitudes and understandings. The progressive disappearance of those with direct experience does not automatically mean the extinction of their memories. It will, however, mean a change, although the exact form that this takes remains to be seen.

⁴⁵⁴ Louis Grossard, 'Vingt ans après', *L'Algérianiste*, 17 (March 1982), 4.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. 4.

⁴⁵⁶ Yves Sainsot, ANFANOMA, questionnaire response.

⁴⁵⁷ Yves Clement, 'Pied-Noir, une affaire d'âge' *PNM*, 14 (April 1991), 7.

The Harki Community

5. Breaking the Silence: The activism of the *filis de harkis*, 1962-1991

On 7 May 1975, the normally peaceful town of Sainte Livrade to the east of Bordeaux was wracked by violence as youths from the nearby Bias camp embarked upon a series of destructive riots. As the unrest rapidly spread, the profile of the orchestrators rose in tandem with the media coverage they attracted. This was how many people came to learn of the *harkis* and also of their impoverished and marginalised status in contemporary France. Hidden from view and effectively imprisoned, often behind barbed wire, in camps or forestry hamlets situated in remote rural areas, the historical trajectory of the *harkis* was encapsulated by the prominent protest slogan ‘After betrayal, abandonment; after abandonment, exile; after exile, oblivion’.⁴⁵⁸ By 1975, conditions in these camps, which were only ever designed to be temporary but had now been in use for over a decade, had deteriorated. This, in combination with the continued harsh discipline and lack of freedom to which residents were subjected, had begun to generate significant frustrations particularly among the descendants of the *harkis*, many of whom were now entering adulthood.⁴⁵⁹ When these simmering tensions boiled over during the summer of 1975, they were framed by demands for the practical amelioration of the situation of the *harkis* and their families, but also for a revalorisation of their history. Tired of being *les oubliés de l’histoire*, the *filis de harkis* were determined to gain recognition on behalf of their parents for the sacrifices they had made for France and the suffering they had endured as a consequence.⁴⁶⁰

However, the *filis de harkis* were not alone in this desire and in fact were relative latecomers to the *harki* activist scene. The thirteen years since the Algerian War ended had witnessed a range of representations offered by a series of self-appointed spokespeople who, in the absence of direct testimony from within the *harki* community and often in the service of their own objectives, took it upon themselves to speak on behalf of the *harkis*. Collective discourses were constructed by external groups from the Algerian and French governments who proposed reductive characterisations of the *harkis* as either traitors or loyal patriots in accordance with their respective national historical narratives, to sub-state groups such as the

⁴⁵⁸ Mohand Hamoumou, with Abderahmen Moumen, ‘L’histoire des harkis et Français musulmans: la fin d’un tabou?’, in *La Guerre d’Algérie 1954-2004: la fin de l’amnésie*, ed. by Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (Paris, 2004), p.339.

⁴⁵⁹ Michel Roux estimated that two thirds of those who took part in the 1975 protests were under twenty. *Les harkis: les oubliés de l’histoire 1954-1991*, (Paris, 1991), p.325.

⁴⁶⁰ The gendered term *filis de harkis* has been deliberately used here to reflect the fact that activism in the period under discussion was an overwhelmingly male dominated and directed endeavour. While the wives and widows of *harkis* were often a consideration for these activists and some women did participate in the protests, it was not until the post-2000 period that female spokespeople from within the *harki* community assumed a prominent role. Although the gender differential at work within the *harki* community is a fascinating and understudied topic, unfortunately a detailed consideration is beyond the scope of this thesis.

former Muslim elite of colonial Algeria, French ex-army personnel, and the *pied-noir* community all of whom felt a connection to, and sense of responsibility for, the *harkis*. Enjoying material and cultural advantages not available to the majority of *ancien supplétifs* or their descendants, these actors were able to dominate the portrayal of the *harkis* in the years immediately following Algerian independence. It was not until the 1970s that their presentations began to be challenged by an emerging core of activists from within the *harki* community, and not until 1991 that these activists could classify themselves as an organised and mature collective memory carrier with their own distinctive voice.

Having already examined the events that brought the *harkis* and their families to France and the provisions put in place to accommodate these new arrivals, this chapter will begin by focusing on the impact these experiences had on the *harkis*. This is intended to suggest the reasons underlying the reluctance of *harkis* to speak of their past, which in turn provides the context for the ability of external commentators to initially dominate representations of the community. It also explains why the internal reappropriation of the past was an endeavour undertaken primarily by the second generation as opposed to the *harkis* themselves.⁴⁶¹ The images presented by groups outside of the *harki* community and the motivations behind them will then be examined, juxtaposed with the portraits of the *harki* community disseminated through the French media. Finally, the chapter will trace the ways these representations were variously accepted or rejected by the *fils de harkis* before being mixed with their own memories and experiences to produce a composite version of the past around which to base their activism. The year 1991 provides a natural end point, signifying both the attainment of the status of a coherent and independent memory carrier by the *fils de harkis*, as well as a turning point in the commemoration and discussion of the War of Independence generally in France.

‘Mon père ne nous en a jamais parlé’

The most widely attested to characteristic of the *harkis*, by both family members and academics, is their recalcitrance when it comes to discussing the past. There were many reasons underpinning the silence of *harkis*. In the first instance, *harkis* faced a range of linguistic, cultural, and economic barriers that inhibited the transmission of history and memory at a very practical level. Those who arrived in France at the end of the war were overwhelmingly of rural origin, unskilled and illiterate, many not even able to speak French.

⁴⁶¹ The terms ‘first generation’ and ‘second generation’ are not meant to suggest that there is a second generation of *harkis*, nor to deny the French nationality of descendants of the *harkis*. Rather, the term is used to convey the idea of there being a memory pertaining specifically to those who lived through the years 1954 to 1962, the first generation, which is distinct from, but nonetheless intimately connected to, the history and identity of their descendants, that is to say to the second generation.

Thrown into a completely alien world, simply adjusting to their new situation was a full-time occupation for most *harkis* and their wives. Even those *harkis* who possessed the relative advantage of being able to read, write and speak French quickly discovered that finding people willing to listen when you are part of a marginalised, socially disempowered minority was no easy task. This situation was compounded by the physical isolation of the *harkis*. Whatever form of *centre d'accueil* they were housed in, the fact remains that the *harkis* were *mis à l'écart* and denied contact with the wider populace. The only autochthonous French people they interacted with were the *militaires* and *pieds-noirs* in charge of the camps, or the members of the *Croix Rouge* who came periodically to donate clothes and make inspections. This segregation left the *harkis* unable to 'faire l'apprentissage de la France' and exacerbated their sentiment of being a population with neither nationality nor territory.⁴⁶² The *harki* Saïd Ferdi closed his 1981 memoir with the observation: 'je peux affirmer que ce furent celles de centaines de milliers de gens restés vingt ans sans patrie. Pour eux, comme moi, il n'y a ni terre natale, ni frontières. Nous ne reconnaissons dans aucun pays...'⁴⁶³ Furthermore, many families spent time in several of these locations before finally achieving permanent settlement, a disruptive and distressing process that appeared to operate at random as far as the *harkis* were concerned. Given the importance of group and spatial stability for the construction of social frameworks of memory, it is easy to see why the insecure situations into which the *harkis* were placed militated against the transmission of memories.⁴⁶⁴

On both the physical and mental periphery of France, the *harkis* reacted to their marginalisation by turning in on themselves.⁴⁶⁵ Although the *harki* community was not a natural phenomenon and the camps were a mix of tribes, regions, dialects, and religions, the shared experiences of loss, isolation, and deprivation forged a powerful sense of unity and an ethos of mutual aid. It was also the case that certain customs and practices common to life in Algeria transcended these divisions providing a point of anchorage for dislocated individuals. While taking mint tea with a *harki*, the interviewer for the 1977 documentary *Harkis* asked if maintaining traditions such as this acted as a barrier to integration in France. His host replied that continuing to do as they did in Algeria was simply an expression of nostalgia for a country they were forbidden from returning to.⁴⁶⁶ Certain traditions however, while they might not have prevented integration, did inhibit the transmission of the past. Silence in this

⁴⁶² Mohand Hamoumou, 'Les harkis, un trou de mémoire franco-algérien', *Esprit*, 161 (May 1990), 39.

⁴⁶³ Saïd Ferdi, *Un enfant dans la guerre*, (Paris, 1981), p.206.

⁴⁶⁴ This observation has also been made by Jim House with respect to the Algerian immigrant population in France who suffered similarly precarious living condition in *bidonvilles* and *foyers*. Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror and Memory*, (Oxford, 2006), p.266.

⁴⁶⁵ Although a defensive response prompted by their own sense of rejection, this was often mistaken for a refusal to integrate. Mohand Hamoumou, 'Révoltes des enfants d'anciens harkis: quelques clés pour comprendre', *Esprit*, 174 (September 1991), 113.

⁴⁶⁶ 'Harki', *Les dossiers de l'écran*, aired 17 May 1977 (Channel 2).

context was linked to the culture of paternal deference and respect. Family hierarchies were extremely important to *harkis* who considered it the man's job to provide for and rule over his spouse and children in order to ensure that family honour was maintained. This role did not include being emotionally open or demonstrative. As one *filles de harki* explained, 'dans notre culture...les enfants ne posent pas de question aux parents. Encore moins les filles à leurs pères. Alors, j'ai grandi avec ces questions sans réponses'.⁴⁶⁷ More persistently inquisitive children were often rebuffed with the Kabyle maxim 'li fat met', the past is dead. This emotional distance was frequently compounded by the physical absence of fathers who, if they were able to find work, worked long hours and six days a week. However, the emasculated environment in which the majority of *harkis* were forced to live undermined this authoritative ideal often leading to a loss of self-respect. Constrained and dictated to by forces beyond their control, rendered passive and dependent outside their homes, many unable to find work and thus provide for their families or even to occupy themselves during the long days, these *déraciné* men suffered 'un véritable tremblement de terre psychologique' which naturally affected their relationships within the family circle.⁴⁶⁸ References to alcoholism and domestic violence are quite frequent. In the Bias bar, Boussad Azni described the atmosphere of despair where:

[L]es harkis traînaient toute la journée...Ils buvaient, ils jouaient aux cartes, ils se disputaient, ils se bagarraient. Toute cette violence en eux l'écho des violences qu'ils avaient subis, se retournait contre eux-mêmes. C'était une manière de suicide lent...Mon père y passait ses journées, et rentrait soûl, le soir.⁴⁶⁹

These accounts suggest a process of retreat as traumatised individuals attempted to come to terms with their past and present. As much as there were practical obstacles to the organisation and transmission of memory, there was an even more potent lack of will to carry out such tasks on the part of the *harkis* themselves. One of the principal reasons behind this behaviour was the fear that pervaded the *harki* community. The *zones à forte concentration* essentially exported and replicated the mentality and power structures of colonial Algeria with all the attendant exploitation and mistreatment, especially as the oversight of these camps tended to be entrusted to *pieds-noirs* or military personnel who had spent part of their career in North Africa. This rendered the *harkis* dependent upon them to meet their most

⁴⁶⁷ Quoted in Jean-Jacques Jordi and Mohand Hamoumou, *Les harkis, une mémoire enfouie*, (Paris, 1999), p.121.

⁴⁶⁸ Abd-el-Aziz Méliani, *Le drame des harkis*, (Paris, 2001), p.196.

⁴⁶⁹ Boussad Azni, *Harkis, crime d'État: Généalogie d'un abandon*, (Paris, 2002), p.119.

basic needs and thus almost completely at their mercy.⁴⁷⁰ Insults, arbitrary discipline, and deprivations were consequently suffered in silence because there was no other option, no external recourse. A doctor who had been assigned to Bias for three months at the age of twenty-five, but who had ended up staying for thirty years provided the following damning assessment of the mentality that reigned in the camps:

Ils ont recréé l'Algérie de papa, avec l'anisette, la kémie et tous les poncifs de là-bas. Les pieds-noirs traitaient les harkis comme des indigènes: ils les dépréciaient, les manipulaient, les humiliaient. Ils étaient ravis d'avoir ramené un morceau d'Algérie coloniale avec eux, d'avoir rapatrié leurs fellahs. Les uns dominaient les autres, c'était la logique du système.⁴⁷¹

In these self-enclosed environments with their vastly unequal power structures, the threat of punishment was powerful and used regularly to keep the *harkis* 'in line'. Punishments ranged from being deprived of food, money, or privileges, to expulsion from the camp, being sent to the infamous 'Centre' (in fact three disciplinary youth centres located in Pau, Moumar, and Gelos), or being sent to Candélie, the *harki* psychiatric hospital. This latter fate befell Boussad Anzi's father who was forcibly removed and 'hospitalised' following an altercation with the head of the camp.⁴⁷² The ultimate disciplinary threat, however, was being sent back to Algeria. Upon discovering the terrible living conditions at Rivesaltes, Kerchouche's parents dared not complain because they were 'terrifiés à l'idée que les soldats ne les renvoient en Algérie'.⁴⁷³ These fears persisted beyond the walls of the camps. After a decade spent in various locations, Kerchouche's parents eventually succeeded in purchasing a small home of their own. Yet when Kerchouche told her mother of her intention to write a book tracing their family history almost thirty years later, she was surprised by her reaction: 'Quand j'ai parlé à ma mère de mon projet...elle m'a dit, craintive: "Et s'ils nous le reprochent?" Moi, scandalisé: "Si quelqu'un a des reproches à faire, c'est toi, pas eux"'.⁴⁷⁴ It is only as Kerchouche learns about her parents' history that she begins to understand the source of their ongoing anxieties and comes to appreciate that it is 'Par peur de recevoir des

⁴⁷⁰ Tom Charbit, 'Un petit monde colonial en métropole: Le camps de harkis de Saint-Maurice-l'Ardoise (1962-1976)', *Politix*, 76 (2006), 45. This policy has also been noted by Choukri Hmed in relation to Algerian immigrants who lived in SONACOTRA foyers during the 1960s and 1970s. See "'Tenir ses hommes": La gestion des étrangers "isolés" dans les foyers SONACOTRA après la guerre d'Algérie', *Politix*, 76 (2006), 11-30.

⁴⁷¹ Dalila Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, (Paris, 2003), p.148.

⁴⁷² Anzi, *Harkis*, p.121

⁴⁷³ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.57.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid. p.15.

coups, craignent le jugement de l'Histoire, les harkis hésitant à parler. Comme si parler et écrire, était trahir encore...'⁴⁷⁵

These fears existed alongside the trauma of the exceptionally violent end of French Algeria which left both physical and mental scars. The majority of *harkis* fled their homeland fearing, with great justification, for their lives. 'Malgré les soucis nous étions contents d'avoir trouvé d'asile' explained one, 'Chaque fois que nous entendions raconter ce qu'il s'était passé au bled, nous disions merci à Dieu. Merci, d'avoir survécu, parce que ça n'avait pas été le cas de tout le monde'.⁴⁷⁶ Yet even though they knew they were the lucky ones, no *harki* survived unscathed; many had lost members of their families, or had witnessed scenes of atrocity and some had themselves been the victims of torture. This was in addition to the trauma of having to leave their homes, belongings and in many cases members of their family behind with little or no forewarning and frequently at great personal risk. In a state of shock, 'la population se replié sur elle-même, passé ses blessures, tente d'oublier le cauchemar' with the result that during the early decades of their lives in France, 'un véritable "travail de deuil" s'est effectué en silence'.⁴⁷⁷ Boussad Azni described the camps he grew up in as being full of people 'emprisonnés dans leurs pensées plus sûrement encore que derrière les barbelés'.⁴⁷⁸

These silences did not imply that the *harkis* had forgotten, not least because in the case of those who had been injured, or captured and tortured, they bore physical reminders of their ordeals. 'Je garde présents à la mémoire d'affreux souvenirs', wrote Saïd Ferdi, 'et, si j'essaie de les oublier, les traces physiques que je porte aujourd'hui me rappellent à chaque instant les heures douloureuse de mon passé'.⁴⁷⁹ Instead, silence was often used as a coping mechanism. A former teacher who worked with the *harkis* in Manosque felt that the past was just 'trop dur à porter et même à expliquer'.⁴⁸⁰ His assessment alludes to the factor that provided the final nail in this coffin of silence: the difficulty of explaining the 'choice' the *harkis* had made which, according to the dominant contemporary narratives, was to be either Algerian traitors or French patriots, depending which side of the Mediterranean you were on. Of course the reality of the situation was infinitely more complex and the notion of 'choice' distinctly problematic but, whatever the nuances of individual histories, the years 1954-1962 were, for the majority of *harkis*, a past that was difficult for them to understand and assume themselves, let alone to communicate and justify to others. Upon reaching thirty, one *fils de harki* asked his father to tell him a little about what had happened in Algeria. His father

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, p.15.

⁴⁷⁶ Cited in Bernard Derrieu et al., *La Cité de Tapis: une communauté de rapatriés d'Algérie*, (Pézenas, 1997), p.14.

⁴⁷⁷ Mohand Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenu harkis*, (Paris, 1993), pp.295-297.

⁴⁷⁸ Azni, *Harkis*, p.117.

⁴⁷⁹ Ferdi, *Un enfant*, p.205.

⁴⁸⁰ Saïd Bouamama, *Jeunes Manosquins issus de l'immigration algérienne*, (Manosque, 2003), p.43.

replied: “Qu’est ce que tu veux que je t’ en raconte? Je ne sais pas moi-même ce qui s’est passé alors veux-tu que je te raconte à toi?”⁴⁸¹

The diverse reasons which underpinned engagement with the French and the fact that the decision was often not a choice over which the *harki* was master, left *harkis* with the conundrum of how to criticise the French state for treating them little better than animals from the shaky platform of having sided with the French sometimes as a last resort, sometimes against their will, and almost always with less patriotic fervour and commitment than the pro-*Algérie-française* lobby would have people believe. On a more personal level, the *harkis* faced the problem of conveying the situation in which their ‘choices’ were made to children who were either too young to appreciate such things, or who had been born after 1962. It was even more difficult to contextualise and rationalise such decisions when the practical results had been so overwhelmingly negative, for all concerned. Many *harkis* were afraid to even attempt to justify themselves to their children who had to live with the consequences of their actions.

A further complication lay in the label of ‘traitor’ that was originally attached to the *harkis* by the Algerian government, but which quickly radiated outwards. An opinion poll published in *Le Monde* on 27 February 1992, revealed that the FLN’s struggle during the War of Independence was understood by the French to be analogous to the actions of the Résistance during the Second World War. In such a schema, the *harkis* were assimilated to ‘collabos’.⁴⁸² Enclosed in silence by the combined weight of the factors discussed above, many *harkis* appear to have adopted externally generated epithets, leading them to make confession such as ‘Parfois, je me sens en colère contre la France. Mais je me dis aussi que c’est moi qui l’ai choisi. Alors je l’assume.’⁴⁸³ Essentially they became prisoners of official representations, coming to see themselves as the traitors that others accused them of being. The consequences of such internalisation could be serious. Fatima related how her husband suffered from very bad health after arriving in France. Although he ostensibly blamed this on the climate, Fatima reached a different conclusion: ‘Il était surtout malade d’être mal considéré en Algérie comme en France’.⁴⁸⁴ The potency of this stigmatisation led many fathers to attempt to protect their children from guilt by association by surrounding them with a ‘halo de silence’ with respect to the past.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. p.40.

⁴⁸² Jean Michel Dumay, ‘Un enseignement en sourdine’, *Le Monde*, 27 February, 1992.

⁴⁸³ Hocine, cited in Stéphan Gladieu and Dalila Kerchouche, *Destins de harkis: Aux racines d’un exil*, (Paris, 2003), p.96.

⁴⁸⁴ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères: paroles blessées: Une autre histoire de harkis*, (Léchéle, 2006), p.75.

⁴⁸⁵ Emmanuel Brillet, ‘La contingence et la geste: le harki, l’indicible du “mouvement de l’histoire”’, in *L’époque de la disparition: Politique et esthétique*, ed. by Alain Brossat and Jean-Louis Déotte, (Paris, 2000), p.144.

‘Patriots’ or ‘traitors’: Official representations of the *harkis*

Although the factors discussed above came together in a range of different combinations, the collective end result was the same: a silence surrounding the past so complete that one *filles de harki* wondered ‘si nos parents n’avaient pas perdu la mémoire?’ ‘Ils nous manquait à nous les enfants les morceaux de notre histoire’ she explained.⁴⁸⁶ Therefore, in contrast to groups like the *pièdes-noirs*, there was no initial outpouring of memoirs, nor any politicised collective mobilisation from the *harki* population. Instead, it took over a decade and the emergence of a new generation for this silence to be definitively broken. The organised, public presence of the *harkis* dates from the early to mid-1970s, with the Mouvement d’assistance et de défense des rapatriés d’Afrique du Nord (MADRAN), formed in August 1971 by Ahmed Kaberseli, widely regarded as the first *harki*-led association.⁴⁸⁷ Although there were only 40 such associations in 1973, by 1991 up to 400 were believed to exist.⁴⁸⁸ This newfound visibility has been an overwhelmingly second generation inspired and led endeavour. Crucial in stimulating this activism were the two ‘hot’ summers of 1975 and 1991, as well as the lack of government action in the intervening years to improve the lives of the *harki* community.⁴⁸⁹ Although 1991 was not simply a repeat of 1975, the dual platform of demands advanced remained consistent. First, practical measures to ameliorate the situation of both generations were sought; second, calls for the recognition and rehabilitation of the history of the *harkis* were prominent on both occasions. The need for moral as well as material reparation for the treatment of the *harkis* at the end of the war and beyond was thus important in framing and legitimating the more practical facets of the 1975 and 1991 campaigns, as well as the wider activism they inspired.

The problem with this latter ambition was that with their access to the past effectively blocked off by a wall of parental silence, the increasingly mobilised second generation were forced to look outside their community for the answers to their many questions about their history and identity. Yet the most obvious starting points in their quest yielded little, with neither the Algerian nor the French governments offering what could be regarded as

⁴⁸⁶ Cited in Jordi and Hamoumou, *Les harkis*, p.123.

⁴⁸⁷ Stéphanie Abrial, *Les enfants de harkis de la révolte à l’intégration*, (Paris, 2001), p.48.

⁴⁸⁸ Hamoumou, ‘Les harkis’, p. 40; Hamoumou, ‘L’histoire des harkis’, p. 341.

⁴⁸⁹ Other factors that may have contributed to the timing of the emergence of this activism include the better economic situation enjoyed by some *harki* families which gave them greater means and an incentive to help those less fortunate; the decline in interest of many associations that had previously campaigned on behalf of the *harkis*; the post-68 climate in which the idea of minority identities and rights was gaining acceptance in French society; finally, in July 1970 the government passed an indemnisation law which promised 9.3 million francs to European *rapatriés* but made no provisions for the *harkis*. For further details on the two summers see Roux, *Les harkis*, pp.345-349; Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenus harkis*, p.299.

supportive *cadres sociaux* through which the *filles de harkis* could assemble and articulate a version of their community's past. On the Algerian side, the *harkis* faced the hegemonic narrative of the FLN-dominated government which sought to legitimate itself by propagating the myth of an entire nation united in a nationalist struggle for independence. The logic of their mantra 'un seul héros, le peuple' dictated the denial of any internal divisions or any substantial pro-French element, relegating the *harkis* to the role of 'traitor'. More recently, events like 'Black October' and the violence of the 1990s have been used by some to advance the argument that rather than a *mauvais choix*, the decision of the *harkis* to support France was judicious and far-sighted. However, this has had little impact in Algeria where school textbooks continue to teach that the *harkis* were groups of people who 'ont préféré se vendre à l'ennemi et combattre leurs propres frères...en échange d'argent, de biens, de titres'.⁴⁹⁰ As current president Abdelaziz Bouteflika made clear during his state visit to France in 2000, 'le temps n'est pas encore venu pour des visites des harkis, c'est exactement si on demandait à un français de la Résistance de toucher la main à un collabo'.⁴⁹¹

On the opposite side of the Mediterranean, the *harkis* faced 'a complicit silence' as a Gaullist vision of decolonisation took root that presented the process as a historical inevitability that allowed France to relieve herself of her burdensome colonial commitments and focus on modernisation.⁴⁹² Turning the page on this inglorious and embarrassing past was made a priority and the *harkis* were the principal casualties of a state-sponsored *effacement*. Beginning with de Gaulle, this attitude extended into the presidency of Giscard d'Estaing and, while things did begin to change under Mitterrand, it was not until Chirac took power that the prevailing orthodoxy was significantly challenged. Yet paradoxically this commemorative absence was accompanied by an almost excessive practical preoccupation with the *harkis*. Far from having forgotten the community, successive governments paid great attention to their material conditions, providing housing, education and financial benefits. Unfortunately, these measures seem to have succeeded only in keeping the *harki* community together and to the edges of French society.⁴⁹³ Housing policies have produced and reproduced ghettos, while the administration of the community stands accused of having fostered a culture of dependence and passivity that spans generations. The silence emanating from the French state was further

⁴⁹⁰ Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère, *La guerre des mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial*, (Paris, 2007), p.59.

⁴⁹¹ 'Duplex Bouteflika', *JA2 20 heures*, aired 16 June 2000 (Antenne 2). For further analysis of Algerian politics in the post-war period see Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*, (New Haven; London, 2007).

⁴⁹² Maurice Faivre, 'Les Français-Musulmans dans la guerre d'Algérie: Les représailles et l'oubli de la France', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 180 (October 1995), 164.

⁴⁹³ Other academics have taken issue with the idea of the French state having 'forgotten' the *harkis*, notably Jordi and Hamoumou who have argued that it is more accurate to speak of 'une véritable chape de silence'. The testimony of *filles de harki* M.K. is cited in support of this: 'Moi, j'aurais bien voulu qu'on m'oublie, qu'on oublie mon père, que la France et l'Algérie nous oublient. Au moins on aurait pu faire comme les *piets-noirs*. On serait partie sans problèmes...' *Les harkis*, p.55.

compounded by the fact that many *harki* children who grew up in the camps in the 1960s and 1970s also received their education there, being denied access to the schools of the Republic. But even those who did receive a mainstream education would still not have gleaned much about their family history since the War of Independence was not introduced into the *Troisième* until 1980 and the *Terminale* until 1983. Even then, textbooks either omitted the *harkis* altogether, or mentioned them only briefly, usually as an appendix to the *pied-noir* exodus of 1962.

‘Frères par le sang versé’

Moving beyond official historical interpretations to sub-state memory carriers who concerned themselves with the *harkis*, the most famous champion of the *harki* cause in the immediate post-war years was the Bachaga Saïd Boualam. The Bachaga was born in 1906 into a family of Muslim notables with a long history of co-operation with the French. In 1946, after a twenty-year career, the Bachaga left the French army in order to administer his family’s vast estate. He entered the Assemblée nationale in 1958 as a deputy, rising to the position of vice-president, which he held until 1962. During the War of Independence he was an ardent supporter of the French cause and in July 1956 was placed in charge of the *harka* for his region. At the end of the war, the French government evacuated the Bachaga and his sizable entourage of approximately sixty people, installing them on an estate in the south of France which rapidly became a focal point for the local *harki* and *pied-noir* populations. Widely regarded as the emblematic personality of the *harki* community, the Bachaga was charismatic, articulate, and politically savvy. This self-appointed spokesman used his considerable reputation and means to campaign on behalf of ‘his’ *harkis* whom he considered to have been cruelly betrayed in 1962.⁴⁹⁴

The Bachaga, along with the majority of indigenous elites, viewed the *harkis* as the logical continuation of a long tradition of French military service which had taken their fathers to Monte Cassino and their grandfathers to Verdun. The *harkis* were therefore considered to be indisputably French having acquired this right through *le sang versé*. Addressing the French people, the Bachaga stated his case unequivocally: ‘Le sang des vôtres et des miens s’est mêlé pour défendre cette terre de France...Des Boualams, il en est mort aux quatre coins du monde pour y défendre la France et après ça on ose dire que nous ne sommes

⁴⁹⁴ ‘Récits d’atrocités’, *Libération*, 30 August 2001, p. 1. The Bachaga also penned three books in as many years, all in defence of the *harkis*. *Mon pays*, (Paris, 1962); *Les harkis au service de la France*, (Paris, 1963); *L’Algérie sans la France*, (Paris, 1964).

pas Français?’⁴⁹⁵ This is also the source of the debt the Bachaga believed France did not honour at the close of the conflict when the army failed to protect its auxiliaries.

In general, indigenous notables such as the Bachaga benefited from, and thus supported, the presence of the French in Algeria. In terms remarkably similar to those of the *pieds-noirs*, they evoke a pre-war atmosphere of harmonious inter-ethnic co-existence in which ‘les Européens étaient nos amis; enfants, nous jouions ensemble. Il n’y avait aucune friction entre les communautés’.⁴⁹⁶ Algeria, according to this interpretation, was a country that would have been nothing without French impetus, but which was collectively constructed amidst an atmosphere of fraternal co-operation for the benefit of all. Although mistakes were acknowledged, particularly not integrating the native inhabitants into the administrative structures of their own country, these were attributed to out of touch politicians in Paris, thus conveniently exculpating the *pieds-noirs* and notables such as the Bachaga.⁴⁹⁷ Out of this perception came the argument that the people of Algeria did not want independence, merely more autonomy and equality within the framework of continued affiliation with France. ‘J’ai longtemps rêvé d’une décolonisation qui ne soit pas une déchirure mais une alliance’, claimed another prominent elite figure, the Algeria-born, Saint Cyr educated Colonel Abd-el-Aziz Méliani.⁴⁹⁸

Enrolling on the French side when the war broke out was considered to be the natural course of action by elites like the Bachaga who presented the decision of the *harkis* as a freely made choice. This allowed the war to be cast as ‘d’abord un soulèvement contre les égorgeurs et les pillards et une fraternisation totale des musulmans et des Français contre ce déchaînement de haine’.⁴⁹⁹ Given the apparent strength of this pro-French sentiment, combined with the vastly superior resources at France’s disposal, the eventual loss of the war could only be explained by weak-willed government in the capital. This sets up a convenient opposition between the treachery of France in her short-term political incarnation and *la France profonde* to which the *harkis* and the Muslim elite remained loyal. ‘Nous ne confondus pas la France véritable avec celle qui nous a trahis’, explained the Bachaga, a distinction that allowed him to decry the abandonment of the *harkis* without jeopardising his argument that they had been right to choose France and deserved to be compensated for their sacrifices.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁵ Boualam, *Mon pays*, pp.14, 47.

⁴⁹⁶ Brahim F. cited in Francis Mauro and Bathoche Mahious, *Compiègne, terre d’accueil pour les harkis: Témoignages*, (Aginccourt, 2004), p.49.

⁴⁹⁷ Boualam, *Mon pays*, p.34.

⁴⁹⁸ Aziz Méliani and Daniel Bernard, “J’ai choisi la France”: Entretien avec le Colonel Aziz Méliani’, in *L’Algérie des Français*, p.292.

⁴⁹⁹ Boualam, *Mon pays*, p.31.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. p.92.

As part of an educated and privileged elite, the Bachaga was in no way representative of the mass of *ancien supplétifs* on whose behalf he spoke, but he was their public face until the mid-1970s when ill health forced him to retire. The Bachaga was also something of an anomaly within his own community of notables since early *harki*-orientated activism was characterised by a lack of elite participation in spite of their material and cultural advantages. In 1975, MADRAN president Ahmed Kaberseli sent 130 letters to prominent figures like the Bachaga asking if they would be willing to assist the *harki* population; he received only two affirmative replies.⁵⁰¹ Not only were elites reluctant to get their hands dirty with the practical aspects of campaigning, they appear to have preferred not to be associated with the *harki* population at all. Mohand Hamoumou's contention that these men feared that they would in some way devalue themselves by rubbing shoulders with former auxiliaries is born out by the reaction of Colonel Méliani upon being referred to as a *harki* in the course of an interview: 'Pardon' he pointedly interrupts the host, 'je ne suis pas harki, je suis Saint-Cyrien'.⁵⁰²

'Frères d'armes' and 'frères de repatriement'

In spite of his isolation within the elite milieu, the Bachaga's presentation of the *harkis* and their history remained potent because it closely corresponded with that of two other groups who also campaigned on behalf of the *harkis* during this period: *ex-militaires* and the *pieds-noirs*. Frenchmen who had served in Algeria were quick to concern themselves with the *harkis* on the basis of their status as *frères d'armes* and their concomitant right to pensions and other *ancien combattant* benefits. Prior to MADRAN, the Comité Parodi, created on the initiative of young officers who had served in Algeria and headed by the Vice President of the Conseil d'État Alexandre Parodi, was the primary defender of the *harki* cause. Although the Comité Parodi occupied itself specifically with the *harkis*, the community were also given consideration within the remit of broader veterans groups. In addition to assisting the *harkis* materially with housing and jobs, these associations also advanced a particular historical interpretation which cast the *harkis* as loyal soldiers who chose to fight for France because they wished to remain French and who were then betrayed at the end of the war by the politicians, bringing shame and dishonour to the army.

The desire to alleviate this sense of shame by emphasising a personal commitment to 'their' *harkis*, both in 1962 and subsequently, appears to lie behind the activism of many. The dedication in Georges Fleury's book, *Le combat des harkis*, read: 'À tous les musulmans qui

⁵⁰¹ Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenus harkis*, p.39.

⁵⁰² 'Algérie: de la France à la guerre civile des blessures toujours à vif', *Ex libris*, aired 21 September 1995 (Channel 1). The irony is that Méliani is one of a handful of elites who have opted to speak on behalf of the *harkis*, albeit from a clearly established position of superiority.

nous sont demeurés fidèles...malgré tout!'; an attitude also evident in the collection of memoirs from the higher ranks of the army.⁵⁰³ The experience of fighting alongside the *harkis* was deemed to have given these men a privileged insight into the 'true' sentiments and motivation of the *supplétif*, which they then sought to share with the wider French public. Like the Bachaga, these men felt the need to assume a paternalistic responsibility for 'their' *harkis*; speaking on behalf of those they deemed incapable of speaking for themselves. The wartime mentality of the *bled* was thus in many ways transported back to the mainland along with the troops. Yet just as the *harkis* were only part of the French forces during the conflict, after the war they formed only a fraction of the agenda of the main veterans' associations. Attention was directed towards them only sporadically, and then always as a special category of troops, veterans *entièrement à part* rather than *à part entière*. Even the existence of specifically dedicated associations and the support of high-profile figures such as Maurice Faivre and Bernard Moinet produced few tangible gains for the *harkis* in the years leading up to 1991.⁵⁰⁴

In conjunction with the Bachaga and veterans, *pied-noir* activists focused attention on the *harkis* because they shared the experience of having been proud French citizens who were deliberately deceived by de Gaulle and then forced to flee their homeland in fear of their lives as a consequence of independence. The *harkis* therefore had the same right to recognition and recompense from the French nation that the *pieds-noirs* so vehemently agitated for. As Jo Sohet declared passionately in *L'Algérieniste*, 'Rompre le silence, complice du mensonge, apporter une pierre à l'édifice de vérité, rendre hommage et surtout rendre justice aux harkis, frères et compagnons d'armes par libre choix, des soldats de France, voilà ma volonté, mon ambition'.⁵⁰⁵ Yet as Joëlle Hureau has pointed out, *pied-noir* support was by no means disinterested. Whatever the *pieds-noirs* had suffered - exile, *déracinement*, discrimination, deprivation - the *harkis*' experience had been, and continued to be, much worse. Consequently, for *pied-noir* associations the situation of the *harkis* functioned as 'une amplification de la leur', underscoring their case for the terrible and unnecessary suffering caused by the end of French Algeria.⁵⁰⁶ The *harkis* also provided a perfect alibi against charges of racism and exploitation that were regularly levelled at *pieds-noirs* with the decision of over 200,000 Algerians to risk their lives in order to defend French Algeria

⁵⁰³ Georges Fleury, *Le combat des Harkis*, (Versailles, 1989). See also Bernard Moinet, *Journal d'une agonie*, (Paris, 1965, reprinted 1999); Maurice Faivre, *Un village de harkis des Babors au pays drouais*, (Paris, 1994); François Meyer, *Pour l'honneur avec les harkis: de 1958 à nos jours*, (Tours, 2005).

⁵⁰⁴ For a comprehensive list of measures in favour of the *harkis* see William B. Cohen, 'The Harkis: History and Memory' in *Algeria and France 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. by Patricia M.E. Lorcin, (New York, 2006), p.176.

⁵⁰⁵ Jo Sohet, 'Les Harkis, ces oubliés de l'histoire 1962-1978', *L'Algérieniste*, 5 (15 March 1979), 27.

⁵⁰⁶ Joëlle Hureau, *La Mémoire des pieds-noirs de 1830 à nos jours*, (Paris, 2001), p.174.

proving the *fraternité réelle* of colonial Algeria. The Bachaga was particularly valuable in this regard, his wealth and status invoked frequently to refute suggestions that indigenous Algerians were treated as second-class subjects, rather than as fully equal citizens. ‘Vous êtes dans la mort comme jadis dans la vie, le symbole de la fraternité entre les populations d’Algérie’, read one of the many *pied-noir* tributes at the Bacahaga’s funeral in 1982.⁵⁰⁷

Therefore, although the *pieds-noirs* set themselves up in contrast to the government and political parties who were only interested in the *harkis* when it served their own ends, such as during elections, in truth their representations were equally self-serving.⁵⁰⁸ Even campaigns such as ‘Hommage aux harkis’, launched in 1987 by Jeune pied-noir (JPN), failed to ‘honour’ the *harkis* on their own complex terms. The association instead presented them as inextricably linked to the history of the *pied-noir* community by playing down issues such as the pressures that lay behind enrolment, in favour of a narrative stressing the *harkis* ideological commitment to keeping Algeria French.⁵⁰⁹ This is just one example of the fact that the *pied-noir* population acts first and foremost as its own memory carrier, evoking the *harkis* only if, and when, they are useful to their own cause. Interaction and cooperation between the Muslim elites, veterans, and *pieds-noirs* is a long-standing phenomenon. The connections between the three are multiple and over the years have enabled them to create a dense network through which to propagate their mutually reaffirming discourses about the *harkis*. Although they enjoyed nothing like the power of the state in terms of disseminating their historical interpretations, in terms of the impact of their narratives upon the *harkis* and their descendants, it is worth noting that these were generally the people with whom the *harki* community had the most contact.

Outside of representations offered by those with a vested interest in the *harki* community, another vector of transmission was the French media. Coverage in the televised news and the press tended to revolve around moments of crisis such as the ‘hot’ summers of 1975 and 1991, as well as various hunger strikes held in between designed to highlight the community’s ongoing plight.⁵¹⁰ These features generally provided short, factual summaries of the latest developments and lacked all but the briefest historical context. In the opinion of Stéphanie Abrial, they were also alarmist in tone, presenting a negative collective image of

⁵⁰⁷ ‘Un grand Français nous a quitté’, *EA*, 4 (May 1982), p. 10.

⁵⁰⁸ The majority of *harkis* possess French nationality and can therefore vote, something that has traditionally distinguished them from the Algerian immigrant population. Consequently, there have been attempts to present the *harkis* as possessing block-vote potential in a bid to enhance their bargaining position vis-à-vis the government. However, in truth the community is too heterogeneous to deliver a substantial vote for any one party or individual upon command. The evidence also indicates that the main political parties, with the exception of Front National, have never regarded the *harkis* as a significant electoral force since they have done little to actively court their votes.

⁵⁰⁹ For further details on this campaign see Taouès Titraoui and Bernard Coll, *Le livre des harkis*, (Bièvres, 1991), pp.252-254.

⁵¹⁰ See, amongst others, *Grève des harkis*, aired 20 February 1987 (Channel 1); *Santini chez les harkis*, aired 16 April 1987 (Channel 1); *Drame harkis*, aired 25 December 1988 (Channel 1).

the *harki* community as ‘*tous profondément touchés par le malaise des banlieues, ils sont tous revoltés, ils sont tous en situation d’échec*’.⁵¹¹ The small number of *harki*-dedicated documentaries broadcast prior to 1991 were little different, focusing on the arrival, installation, and adaptation of the *harkis*, rather than the reasons behind their presence in France. *C’étaient les harkis*, which aired in 1963, presented a series of newly arrived *harkis* who, after passing before ‘Monsieur le Juge’ in order to obtain French nationality, nervously described themselves to the camera as French and professed loyalty to their new homeland, albeit in broken French.⁵¹² The state was depicted as facilitating their integration through education and training initiatives, while the closing shots lingered on a *harki* family whose children had been given French *prénoms*, implying that the seeds of successful assimilation had been sown.⁵¹³ However, the picture painted in 1977 by *Dossiers de l’écran* was less positive, stressing the *harkis*’ ongoing financial and social difficulties. The majority of the community were described as ‘sans travail, sans famille, sans logement...pas de justice’, although the producers did try to balance this negative image with *harki* success stories, such as the butcher and teacher who had purchased a house in a ‘French’ neighbourhood.⁵¹⁴ More attention was devoted to the many reasons behind enrolment, although most commonly cited was Abdallah’s motivation: ‘j’ai engagé pour gagner le pain pour mes enfants’.⁵¹⁵ Unusually, the programme was followed by a studio debate featuring prominent figures within the embryonic *harki* associational movement, including Kaberseli and M’hamed Larradji, president of the Comité des français musulmans rapatriés d’Afrique du Nord et leurs amis (CFMRAA). This deviated from the usual pattern of inviting *piets-noirs* to discuss the *harkis* as a brief segment within programmes dedicated to their own community.⁵¹⁶ What all these representations have in common is that they offered a simplified and selective picture of the *harkis* in accordance with the priorities of the group responsible for them. In assessing the process through which the hegemony of these interpretations was eventually challenged it is instructive to look closely at which components of these narratives were accepted and which were rejected as the *fils de harkis* sought to reconstruct the history of their parents for themselves.

⁵¹¹ Abrial, *Les enfants*, p.53.

⁵¹² Particularly notable in these sequences is the fact that in recognition of the high illiteracy rates among *harkis* a signature was not required on the nationality documents, a cross was deemed sufficient.

⁵¹³ ‘C’étaient les harkis’, *Cinq colonnes à l’une*, aired 7 June 1963 (Channel 1).

⁵¹⁴ ‘Harki’, aired 17 May 1977.

⁵¹⁵ In contrast to this more nuanced picture stood the local Mayor, a *piet-noir* for whom the *harkis* constituted a single, homogenous block of those who had ‘fait un choix’ for France. ‘Harki’, aired 17 May 1977.

⁵¹⁶ For examples of this latter type of programme see ‘L’Algérie dix ans après’ (part 2), *Quatrième mardi*, aired 30 May 1972 (Channel 1); *Droit de réponse aux piets-noirs*, aired 8 November 1986 (Channel 1); ‘Rapatriés: 25 ans de nostalgie’, *Camera 2*, aired 22 June 1987 (Channel 2).

From 'denunciation' to 'enunciation'

At the height of the 1991 protests, journalist Philippe Bernard observed with respect to the *harki* community that 'les enfants ont soudain soif de cette histoire occultée qui est aussi la leur'.⁵¹⁷ The source of this thirst lies in the problem of how someone roots themselves in a society when they do not know where they come from and when 'personne ne semble capable de reconnaître l'histoire des pères et la qualité de nationaux de toute une population en manque de mémoire'.⁵¹⁸ With such a vital imperative driving them, it is tempting to argue that the *filis de harkis* simply collected fragments relating to their parents' past, wherever available, and fitted them together as best they could to form a picture that was at least comprehensible. In support of this contention it is possible to cite the strong similarities between the vocabulary used by the *filis de harkis* in their early campaigns and that used by commentators external to the community. The most striking examples revolve around the image of the *harkis* as 'français par le sang versé', a placard slogan seen repeatedly during the 1991 protests. There were also numerous references to the long history of military engagements for France, such as Boussad Azni's assertion that 'Nos parents étaient fidèle à leur engagement et jusqu'au bout'.⁵¹⁹ Another dominant theme centres on the argument that the French army disarmed and then abandoned the *harkis* following the signature of the Evian Accords, leaving thousands to be massacred by a vengeful FLN and *marsien* Algerians.⁵²⁰ MADRAN's campaigns, for example, were particularly focused on what Benjamin Stora calls the 'martyrology' of the *harki* community, with the association arguing consistently that the *harkis* were 'les musulmans fidèles qu'ont été abandonnés sans défense, et cela dans les conditions les plus ignomineuses'.⁵²¹ Indeed, one of the components most strongly internalised by the second generation is a sense of collective suffering and injustice, a feeling only heightened, in the opinion of Abrial, by parental silence which was construed as covering unimaginable trauma and grief.⁵²² This view of their parents, but also of themselves, as victims was further reinforced by the objective conditions of their daily lives. Finally, there

⁵¹⁷ Philippe Bernard, 'Harkis: au nom des pères les enfants des anciens supplétifs dénoncent l'injustice dont ils sont victimes', *Le Monde*, 10 July 1991, p.1.

⁵¹⁸ Abrial, *Les enfants*, p.22.

⁵¹⁹ *Harkis: Le crime*, aired 12 February 2002 (ARTE).

⁵²⁰ 'Marsien' is the term used to refer to those Algerians who remained on the fence until the outcome of the war was certain, at which point they came forward claiming a long-standing allegiance to the FLN. They are often identified as having engaged in the most ferocious acts of violence against the *harkis* in an attempt to prove their pro-FLN credentials.

⁵²¹ Ahmed Kaberseli, *Le chagrin sans la pitié*, (Paris, 1988), pp.44, 94; Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, (Paris, 1991), p.208.

⁵²² Abrial, *Les enfants*, p.201.

is the recurrent image of the *harkis* as caught between a rock and a hard place in terms of official narratives with their history 'niée par l'Algérie et refoulée par la France'.⁵²³

For the sociologist Emmanuel Brillet this phenomenon of incorporation can be explained by the absence of an internally generated collective memory. This exposed the children of the *harkis* to a 'situation of loss of inherited identity', which in turn made them vulnerable to externally imposed definitions.⁵²⁴ While there is undoubtedly some truth in this, as an over-arching explanation it oversimplifies the complicated process of memory recuperation and reconstruction. The discourses of others have not simply been passively absorbed and regurgitated; instead, there has been a clearly articulated desire on the part of the *filles de harkis* from the outset to write their own history and thus to take back control of their community's identity and destiny. As Akim, one of the 1991 demonstrators, complained, 'On nous a volé notre *passé* et notre *mémoire*, la France a fait de nous des bâtards de l'histoire'.⁵²⁵

Reappropriating the past was thus seen as a way for the *filles de harkis* to obtain retrospective historical justice, but also to better situate their own identity in the present. As the prominent activist Hacène Arfi explained: 'J'avais vraiment besoin de reconstruire ce passé pour envisager l'avenir'.⁵²⁶ This impulse to *décoloniser l'histoire* which had for so long simply been written about, rather than by, them was by no means unique to the *filles de harkis*, it is common to all those who have been denied the right to speak for themselves. That it took a generation from 1962 for the *harki* community to reach this stage is explicable primarily by the institutionalised environments they lived in which meant that, unlike the homeland they left behind, the *harkis* themselves were never decolonised. In particular, their day-to-day treatment in places such as Saint-Maurice-l'Ardoise, which Tom Charbit aptly labels 'un petit monde colonial dans la métropole', gave the distinct impression that they remained subjects rather than citizens.⁵²⁷

Although the process of reappropriation began earlier, 1991 is regarded as the key turning point, signalling 'la fin de l'objectivation et le passage de la dénonciation à celui d'énonciation'.⁵²⁸ However, untangling themselves from more established groups with an interest in their cause was not a simple process as illustrated by M'hamed Larradji, a protest

⁵²³ Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenus harkis*, p.293. However, it should also be noted that despite this awareness of the ideological trap of the dominant state narratives, it was several years before the nuances of there having been many reasons behind the enrolment of *harkis* became a prominent aspect of *filles de harkis* campaigning.

⁵²⁴ Emmanuel Brillet, 'A Remarkable Heritage: The 'Daily Round' of the Children of the Harkis, between Merger and Villification', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 22.2-3 (July-November 2003), 340.

⁵²⁵ Méliani, *Le drame*, p.193

⁵²⁶ Laurent Muller, *Le silence des harkis*, (Paris, 1999), p.53.

⁵²⁷ Charbit, 'Un petit monde colonial', 33.

⁵²⁸ Géraldine Enjelvin, 'Les Harkis en France: carte d'identité française, identité harkie à la carte?', *MCF*, 11.2 (May 2003), 169.

instigator at Bias in 1975 who became the symbolic figure of the *harki* community during that summer. While he demanded justice for the *harkis* and their families, Larradji came from an elite background and seemed quite happy to ally with the *pied-noir* community both during and after 1975.⁵²⁹ This decision distanced him from many of those he claimed to be representing, particularly the younger elements who were highly critical of him. This was especially the case after the revolt's visibility and momentum were effectively co-opted by certain *pieds-noirs* and used to pressure the government over the issue of indemnification for their own community, eventually securing new measures which failed to make any provision for the *harkis*.⁵³⁰ Yet despite these limitations, Larradji was important as a figurehead who galvanised many within a previously apathetic community. 'Il est le premier *harki* qui ose braver publiquement les autorités', explained Kerchouche when recounting Larradji's impact upon the *harkis* in the camp where her family were living in 1975. She therefore concluded that for all his shortcomings, he did at least shatter the image of *harkis* as 'l'éternel supplétif soumis, docile et fidèle'.⁵³¹ Lessons were learned from 1975, which came to be known as 'l'été des dupes' and in the years following there was a concerted effort by the *filis de harkis* to stand alone with *harki* journals such as *le Rappel* full of warnings about the dangers of external manipulation.

These examples are illustrative of the broader process whereby the *filis de harkis* began taking back control of the presentation of their own past by contesting and rejecting interpretations advanced by others. Chief among these was the notion that their fathers were traitors who betrayed their Algerian brothers. Interviewed for the aptly-titled documentary, *Harki: un traître mot*, Abdelkrim Klech, who has achieved iconic status among the *harkis* through his frequent and lengthy hunger-strikes, deemed the transference of guilt from father to son to be inevitable given that the notion of culpability was simply stated as fact in various media for many years.⁵³² This 'definitive sentence', as Klech calls it, was reinforced by the environments in which his generation grew up. The experience of camps like Rivesaltes prompted Besnaci-Lancou to feel that 'Nous n'étions plus qu'un héritage encombrant pour la France', a sentiment which then led her to wonder 'Si nous étions indésirables, presque parias, étions-nous donc si coupables?'.⁵³³ She went on in her autobiography to speak of the way in which her community internalised the shame they perceived the outside world attached to them: 'La plupart d'entre nous ont intériorisé la honte infréquentable par les

⁵²⁹ Larradji's father was close to the Bachaga Boualam and indeed both men were honorary presidents of Larradji's association, the CFMRAA.

⁵³⁰ Michel Roux, 'À propos des événements de l'été 1991: le "casse tête" Harki', *Migrations société*, 20.4 (March-April 1992), 22.

⁵³¹ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.181.

⁵³² *Harki: un traître mot*, aired 29 April 2002 (France 5).

⁵³³ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki: Le bouleversant témoignage d'une enfant de la guerre d'Algérie*, with Marie-Christine Ray, (Paris, 2005), p.75.

opinions publiques de nos deux pays...La stigmatisation...nous a enfermés dans la culpabilité comme dans une carapace'.⁵³⁴ Growing up with such a sense of stigma explains why, when these activists did find their voice, rejecting the notion of treachery and calling for a revalorisation of the history of their parents were so prominent on their agendas.

In addition to accepted or rejected images from external narratives, the interpretations advanced by the *fils de harkis* also included internally generated components. Firstly, despite protestations that 'Le passé, nos parents n'en parlaient pas', those who have spent time collecting second generation testimonies note a surprising amount of factual and anecdotal knowledge about the past.⁵³⁵ Laurent Muller rationalises this apparent paradox by suggesting that *harki* family histories are 'surdéterminée par une sorte de secrète dont personne ne parle, mais que tout le monde connaît'.⁵³⁶ The most convincing hypothesis for how fragments of the past trickled down from parents to children seems to be analogous to how familial memories more broadly are transmitted. As David Lepoutre has claimed, family memory 'ne se transmet pas comme un savoir constitué, ni dans des modalités de communication spécifiques, mais qu'elle s'acquiert comme une connaissance ordinaire, dans le cours quotidien des interactions au sein de la famille'.⁵³⁷ Therefore anecdotes related by mothers to their children concerning life *là-bas*, outbursts of paternal anger or emotion following Algeria-related news items, parental conversations overheard and relayed by the oldest sibling, all these scenarios suggest ways in which morsels of the past could have been received, consciously or not, by children while growing up.

However, perhaps more significant than these quotidian scraps is the fact that the second generation, particularly the older members, have shared many of their parents' experiences. As Boussad Azni put it, 'nous avons tous, peu ou prou vécu les mêmes déchirements, les mêmes ébahissements'.⁵³⁸ In articulating the history of their parents, the personal experiences of activists therefore featured strongly. These memories tend to revolve around three pivotal events: the war, departure from Algeria, and arrival in France. Hacène Arfi thus relates how his family fled Algeria after his father was stabbed four times in the throat by the FLN, walking through the night in order to reach the port of Algiers. Once safely on a boat bound for France, Arfi described the atmosphere as one of oppressive silence, broken only by the subdued weeping of the women.⁵³⁹ This is echoed by Besnaci-Lancou's own memory of boarding a boat for France: 'Nous montâmes à bord comme on entre dans une cathédrale', she recalled before going on to describe her first night in the Rivesaltes camp

⁵³⁴ Ibid, p.18.

⁵³⁵ Derrieu, *La Cité de Tapis*, p.36.

⁵³⁶ Muller, *Le silence*, p.95.

⁵³⁷ David Lepoutre with Isabelle Cannoodt, *Souvenirs de familles immigrés*, (Paris, 2005), p.290.

⁵³⁸ Azni, *Harkis*, p.100.

⁵³⁹ 'Harkis: des français entièrement à part?', *Contre courant*, aired 25 April 2003 (France 2).

where everything was ‘si irréel’ she felt as if she had ‘quitté le monde humain’.⁵⁴⁰ The majority of memories however, relate to time spent in the various *centres d’accueil*. Initial perceptions remain vivid even many years later with Larbi Bouzaboun, upon returning to Bias in 2006, stating: ‘des images qui défilent dans la tête sont vraiment atroce...c’est l’humiliation, l’oppression...un camp de concentration. Voilà, les remerciements de la France, vis-à-vis nos parents qui ont combattu pour eux, qui ont donné leur vie pour elle’.⁵⁴¹ According to Géraldine Enjelvin, all constructions of identity require a spatial point of reference; the camps, as a veritable *passage oblige* where the *harkis* and their children spent months, if not years, and from which they were often unable to come and go freely, filled this role perfectly, fostering a sense of historical continuity between generations.⁵⁴² It is therefore understandable that internally generated elements formed a significant aspect of the historical interpretations championed by the *filles de harkis* during the early stages of their activism.

The version of the past articulated by the *filles de harkis* on behalf of their parents was thus very much a composite entity, constructed from a combination of internal and external narratives available in the post-war decades. The years leading up to 1991, but particularly from 1975 onwards, were crucial in its gestation, representing a period of not only mounting tension and frustration, but also a gradual gaining in confidence among the *filles de harkis* which ultimately enabled them to assert their own understanding of their community’s history, instead of allowing the field to continue to be dominated by outside commentators. Within this evolution, the existence of externally generated elite discourses about the *harkis* was crucial, giving the *filles* something to both borrow from and react against. The content of these external narratives is valuable not only as a point of comparison to the version of the past proposed by the *filles de harkis*, but also because of what it reveals about the agendas and self-conceptions of those providing the commentaries, many of whom, particularly indigenous notables such as the Bachaga, continue to lack serious and sustained scholarly treatments. Furthermore, the very existence of such discourses challenges the persistent image of the Algerian War as the ‘war without a name’ by demonstrating that the conflict and those who participated in it had always been a preoccupation for various groups, even if their narratives often remained under the radar of the general French population because not enshrined in public commemorative rituals. Yet if 1991 was a turning point for the *filles de harkis* as a memory carrier in their own right, it was also a key year for the portrayal of the Algerian War of Independence in France. This was the moment at which the ‘silence’ perceived as shrouding the conflict was definitively broken, a process that naturally had implications for the evolution of the activism of the *filles*.

⁵⁴⁰ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, pp.62, 67.

⁵⁴¹ ‘Amère patrie’, *Documents* x3, aired 13 October 2006 (France 5).

⁵⁴² Enjelvin, ‘Les Harkis en France’, 164.

6. The Evolution of Activism, 1991-2007

Associations and the Media

It took almost two decades for the *filles de harkis* to emerge as a mature and organised memory carrier, a process that, as the previous chapter demonstrated, was by no means simple and straightforward. The same is true of the years since 1991, which have seen significant changes both within the activist segment of the community and more broadly with respect to the place of the Algerian War of Independence within French history and collective remembrance. As associations run by and for the *harki* community grew in numbers and confidence, the very term ‘harki’ lost its pejorative connotations and was instead reclaimed as an affirmation of a historically unique identity. These years also saw the French media increasingly turn its spotlight on the *harkis*, resulting in a substantial multiplication in documentaries and discussion panels devoted to this previously neglected population. This heightened media profile coincided with, and indeed facilitated, the emergence of a group of prominent individuals who were increasingly presented as emblematic spokespeople for their community. Garnering the lion’s share of the new media attention, this cohort was novel in many respects, not least because it included *filles* as well as *filles de harkis*. Although they shared many characteristics, these men and women emerged into the public eye at different points over a period of more than fifteen years. Each person’s moment in the spotlight was due to certain unique attributes and the resonance of these at particular moments with the wider public mood, while the transition in prominence from one individual to another was indicative of changing contexts and commemorative needs. It is therefore important to understand the background, motivations, and style of activism pursued by these men and women and why these struck a chord more broadly when they did.⁵⁴³ Finally, the 1990s also witnessed ‘une prise en compte officielle’ by ‘les pouvoirs publics plus visibles’ in response to the raised profile of the community and of the war in general, leading many to speak of ‘la fin d’un tabou’ by the dawn of the new millennium.⁵⁴⁴ This in turn impacted upon the strategies adopted by *harki* activists and associations, something most clearly indicated by the increasing recourse to the judicial system to obtain a satisfactory level of practical assistance and official recognition. This chapter seeks to explore each of these major evolutions in turn, while simultaneously highlighting the causality and connections between them so as to

⁵⁴³ It should be noted that this transition has not been a simple linear progression. There has been a considerable degree of overlap throughout and none of the individuals discussed have really ‘disappeared’ from the activist scene, even though the media’s attention may have moved on.

⁵⁴⁴ Mohand Hamoumou, with Abderahmen Moumen, ‘L’histoire des harkis et Français musulmans: la fin d’un tabou?’, in *La Guerre d’Algérie 1954-2004: la fin de l’amnésie*, ed. by Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (Paris, 2004), pp.339, 341.

produce a coherent history of the next phase of the activism undertaken by descendants of the *harkis*.

Characteristics of grassroots activism

‘Dès qu’un harki sait lire et écrire, il crée une association’, the *Libération* reporter Nicolas Beau was told by the president of one such association.⁵⁴⁵ This remark is borne out by the statistics which show that by 2001 more than five hundred *harki* associations existed.⁵⁴⁶ Amid this flourishing grassroots activism, the dual demands for practical assistance and recognition which dominated early organisations have endured, albeit now in a more formally organised context. In principle, association formation represents ‘le moyen le plus efficace’ for the descendants of *harkis*, as for other minority groups, enabling them to combine forces in order to make their voices heard, as well as to confront and surmount common difficulties in a spirit of solidarity.⁵⁴⁷ Yet theory has not translated into practice and assessments of the progress made by these five hundred plus associations have been highly negative. Criticised for, amongst other things, their ‘immaturité et inefficacité politiques’, the difference between the status of the *harki* and *pieds-noirs* communities as collective memory carriers is marked, with the former lacking the coherence, inter-associational networks, established calendar of events, and the regular communications that characterise the latter group.⁵⁴⁸ Journalist Alain Rollat was particularly forthright when he wrote: ‘Elle [la communauté] en a pâti et elle continue d’en pâtir. Sa triste histoire est émaillée, depuis 1962, de grèves de la faim, de marches de protestation, de faits divers oubliés, de mille révoltes individuelles dont l’impact a toujours été limité’.⁵⁴⁹ For Abrial, the weaknesses inherent in these associations are a reflection of the difficulties *harki* descendants have experienced finding their place in French society.⁵⁵⁰ ‘Nous sommes les enfants illégitimes de deux histoires illégitimes’ explained one, or, as Abrial put it, ‘La France est à la fois leur pays d’origine et leur pays d’accueil mais ils ne partagent pas les fondements culturels. L’Algérie n’est ni leur pays ni leur patrie mais ils sont attachés par des liens familiaux, traditionnels et religieux’.⁵⁵¹ The result was a late developing associational movement characterised by a destabilising combination of influences and allegiances.

⁵⁴⁵ Michel Roux, *Les harkis: les oubliés de l’histoire 1954-1991*, (Paris, 1991), p.377.

⁵⁴⁶ Mohand Hamoumou cited in ‘Plus de 500 associations représentent les harkis’, *AFP Infos Françaises*, 23 September 2001.

⁵⁴⁷ Nordine Boulhaïs, *Histoire des harkis du Nord de la France*, (Paris, 2005), p.213.

⁵⁴⁸ Abderahmen Moumen, ‘Les associations harkis: de la revendication sociale au combat pour la reconnaissance’, *Guerre d’Algérie Magazine*, 4 (July-August 2002), 40.

⁵⁴⁹ Cited in Patrick Eveno and Jean Planchais (eds.), *La guerre d’Algérie*, (Paris, 1989), p.366.

⁵⁵⁰ Abrial, Stéphanie, *Les enfants de harkis de la révolte à l’intégration*, (Paris, 2001) pp.23.

⁵⁵¹ Salem Kacet cited in Yvan Gastaut, ‘Le racisme anti-maghrébin et les séquelles de la guerre d’Algérie’, *H&M*, 1174 (March 1991), 41; Abrial, *Les enfants*, pp.66.

Other academics, however, have cited the predominantly local and specific orientation of *harki* associations as the principal problem, with insular concerns preventing wider connections being made across groups, thus calling into question any claim to broad representation. Another obstacle to the development of a strong and cohesive associational movement is the ongoing use of violence. The recurrence in 1993 and 1994 of the extreme style of protests of the ‘hot’ summers divided the *harki* community. On the one hand, there were those who argued this violence was qualitatively different to the violence of *banlieue* riots because it was anchored in the defence of a precise historical cause and that it was furthermore justified given the injustices endured since 1962. On the other hand, there were many who felt the recourse to violence undermined the legitimacy of the demands presented and did more harm than good to the *harki* cause.⁵⁵²

However, the principal root of the failures of the *harki* associational movement is generally deemed to be the heterogeneity of the community. For all that the media tend to present the *harkis* as a block, in truth, as already discussed, it is a case of ‘un milieu plutôt qu’une communauté’.⁵⁵³ What unity does exist is largely due to the shared trauma of exile from Algeria and marginalisation in France. Beneath this lies a myriad of intersecting and overlapping divisions that have impeded attempts to collectivise the *harki* community into a powerful and effective group. Some of these divisions are longstanding such as those pertaining to tribe, region, and religion, as well as the linguistic split between Arabic and Berber.⁵⁵⁴ Further fissures have emerged since 1962, such as a socio-economic generation gap with those born later tending to be better educated and better off. These divisions are manifested in the different approaches pursued by various associations. Most notable in this respect is the Convention nationale des Français Musulmans (CNFM). Although formed in 1979 as part of an attempt to federate the diverse *harki* groups and despite boasting forty-six member associations in 1988, the association has remained aloof from, and inaccessible to, most *harkis*. Hamoumou’s rather scathing assessment of the organisation’s bi-monthly journal, *Le Rappel*, was that it contained ‘peu d’informations’, was ‘rarement polémique ou incisif’ and existed primarily to demonstrate to politicians that there were ‘des Français musulmans rapatriés “bon chic, bon genre” susceptibles de faire partie des états-majors politiques sans détonner’.⁵⁵⁵ Out of touch with the grievances and needs of those they claimed

⁵⁵² Abrial, *Les enfants*, pp.178-184.

⁵⁵³ Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, ‘Harkis: le paradoxe identitaire’, *Regards sur l’actualité*, 175 (November 1991), 43.

⁵⁵⁴ In his study of *harkis* in the north of France, Nordine Boulhaïs noted that one of the reasons the Association des Français Musulmans rapatriés de l’Avesnois (AFMRA) had proved so successful was that the majority of its members originated from the Chaoui tribe. In his eyes, this fact noticeably reduced ‘les excès d’individualisme’ in comparison to other associations. Boulhaïs, *Histoire des harkis*, p.222.

⁵⁵⁵ Mohand Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenu harkis*, (Paris, 1993), p.309.

to speak on behalf of, the CNFM ultimately failed in its federative endeavour. Subsequent efforts to follow in their footsteps such as the États généraux of 24 and 25 March 1990 that sought to unite 350 *harki* associations, also stumbled. According to Boulhaïs, this was ‘un décevant échec’ which suggested that the barriers to unity were insurmountable.⁵⁵⁶

Beyond differences in origin, age, and agenda, the *harki* community has also had to contend with diverse political allegiances as several *fil*s and *fil*les have eschewed *harki*-orientated activism in favour of broader organisations such as SOS Racisme and Sans Frontière which reached their apogees in the mid to late 1980s, while a minority even turned to the Front National.⁵⁵⁷ The politics of others have also impacted negatively upon the associational movement, namely the government’s policy of financial support to associations, which has encouraged a proliferation of small groups and prevented the emergence of a single, powerful and representative spokesperson to act as an intermediary between the community and the state. The overall effect of the lack of complementarity between allegiances, agendas, and structures has been that *harki* associations have struggled to find common platforms.⁵⁵⁸ In essence, proliferation has not been accompanied by depth or durability; out of over five hundred associations, it is estimated that less than 10 per cent are actually active.⁵⁵⁹ This had led to a pattern developing whereby frustrations build up within the most marginalised sections of the community and boil over into violent protest. However, momentum and visibility cannot be sustained long enough for significant gains to be made because there is no strong and united grassroots base to support the surface peak. The result is that ‘Chaque fois la chape d’oubli est retombée très vite. Plus lourde’.⁵⁶⁰

Rise of Media Profile

What is particularly unfortunate is that this endemic weakness within the associational movement has prevented the *harki* community capitalising on the more favourable *cadres sociaux* of the 1990s, in particular the growth of media interest in them. Although never completely absent from the French media, one of the most notable features of the post-1991 period has been the sharp increase in the number of televised documentaries and debates

⁵⁵⁶ Yet interestingly Boulhaïs goes on to note that in contrast to trends in the south of France, the north has seen a decline in the overall number of associations which he attributes partly to an increase federation among smaller associations. Boulhaïs, *Histoire des harkis*, pp.235, 213-216.

⁵⁵⁷ For further information on this see Martin Evans, ‘The *Harkis*: the Experience and Memory of France’s Muslim Auxillary’, in *The Algerian War and the French Army 1954-1962: Experiences, Images, Testimonies*, ed. by Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger, (Basingstoke, 2002), p.130.

⁵⁵⁸ Even at the height of the 1991 protests, the delegation of *harki* representatives invited to talks with the government was riven by factionalism to the point that a joint appeal for calm had to be made by Hacène Arfi and Hamlaoui Mekachera. *Le Monde*, 6 August 1991, p.6.

⁵⁵⁹ Jean-Jacques Jordi, and Mohand Hamoumou, *Les harkis, une mémoire enfouie*, (Paris, 1999), p.41.

⁵⁶⁰ Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenus harkis*, p.40.

devoted to the *harkis* and their descendants. In the 1960s and 1970s, the small number of *harki*-specific programmes were overwhelmingly focused on *la vie quotidienne* of the new arrivals. When documentaries tackling the War of Independence in its entirety began to emerge, the *harkis* were usually featured as brief and stand alone segments. In such programmes their story was generally narrated by a French *ex-militaire* with the emphasis consequently placed upon the shame of abandonment in 1962 and the narrator's personal regret over the fate of his brave and loyal men. Yvon Durand, a former SAS officer, was one such figure; his disgust over the 'hypocrisie' and 'lâcheté' of his civilian and military superiors with respect to the *harkis* compelling him to resign at the end of the war.⁵⁶¹ In these programmes commentary from within the *harki* community was almost always provided by *films* and usually centred on their struggles to adapt and to be treated like the French citizens their identity cards proclaimed them to be. 'On vivait en double exil', Mohammed told the camera in 1982, 'exil de fait d'avoir changer de pays d'une manière aussi tragique et puis exil aussi de la vie même de cette accueil en France'.⁵⁶² Studio debates during this time were still largely the territory of the *pièdes-noirs* and prominent military personnel like Bigeard or Méliani who spoke on behalf of the *harkis*.

In the 1990s the tone changed with the broadcasting of *Les années algériennes* and *La guerre d'Algérie*. After this, treatments of the war in general, but also of the *harkis* became far more common, enabling the community to benefit from a numerical increase in emissions devoted solely to them and from more sustained consideration within programmes with broader scopes. Particularly notable in this respect was *Les années algériennes*, which drew heavily on interviews with Saïd Ferdi who was arrested by the French army aged just 13 and forced to enrol as a *harki*.⁵⁶³ At the end of the conflict he was evacuated to France by the army where he attempted to come to terms with all he had experienced and to start a new life, although he found it impossible to forget the old one, writing, 'je constate avec force qu'il me manquera toujours les plus belles années de ma vie, volées par les hommes'.⁵⁶⁴ Through his willingness to publicly recount his experiences, Ferdi thus became one of the first and the most prominent eyewitnesses to emerge from the *harki* community. By calling into question the idea that *harkis* chose, of their own volition, to fight with the French, his narrative broke with the Manichean division between traitors and patriots, exposing instead the more complex reality. Ferdi was also notable because his testimony was not mediated through a third party. He thus became something of a poster boy for the *harkis*, a status which unfortunately

⁵⁶¹ 'Guerre d'Algérie, Mémoire enfouie d'une génération: 3. Déchirements et fidélités', *Moeurs en direct*, aired 21 November 1982 (Channel 2).

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Although he had previously been featured in a 1981 *Apostrophes* debate, Ferdi's contribution to Stora's documentary was lengthier and more detailed. 'La guerre d'Algérie', *Apostrophes*, aired 11 September 1981 (Channel 2); 'Les tricheurs', *Les années algériennes*, aired 30 September 1991 (A2).

⁵⁶⁴ Saïd Ferdi, *Un enfant dans la guerre*, (Paris, 1981), p.198.

resulted in many of the nuances of his account being lost as the media and public concentrated on the most shocking elements at the expense of the implications of his account for the way the war was being represented and commemorated in France and in Algeria at this time.

Another key media moment occurred when *Planète Chaude* broadcast a three-part documentary exclusively concerning the *harkis*.⁵⁶⁵ Moving from 'l'enrôlement' through 'l'abandon' to 'les fils de l'oubli', a thorough chronological explanation of the *harkis* was offered, supported by interviews with both *harkis* and their children, representing the most in-depth consideration of the subject to-date. Coming two years after *Les années* and the 1991 demonstrations, and mere months after another summer of protest by the *harkis* in the south, *Les harkis* stood at a crossroads. Casting the *harkis* as 'ni patriotes, ni traîtres, mais simplement des victimes', the programme sought to continue in Stora's tradition of adding nuance while also breaking new ground by highlighting previously neglected aspects of this still relatively unknown period of French history.⁵⁶⁶ Consequently, the different roles undertaken by the *harkis* were stressed, particularly the fact that by no means all *harkis* were engaged in active combat. The documentary also did not shy away from evoking the violent nature of the *harki* experience, whether as victims or perpetrators. Tales of FLN atrocities, especially in the closing stages of the war, were told, accompanied by montages of massacred *harkis* and abandoned villages. These were, however, juxtaposed with testimony from men like Yahia Zaid who confessed that he would never forget the treatment of the 'suspects' who passed through the hands of his Commando.⁵⁶⁷ This is also one of the few *harki*-orientated television emissions, indeed treatments of the *harkis* in any media, to dwell at length on the role of the *harkis* on 17 October 1961 as part of Papon's FPA. The 'impressionnante' record of the FPA in breaking FLN cells in Paris is related by a former FPA commander Pierre de Roujoux and supported by photos of large caches of weapons recovered from the FLN and a series of headlines from the time with captions such as 'La Goutte d'Or, quand les harkis passent les rues se vident'.⁵⁶⁸

However, although innovative in certain respects, other aspects of *Les harkis* conformed very much to traditional patterns of representation. While space was reserved for direct testimony from *harkis* and their children, the majority of commentary was provided by people external to the community. Whether from a military, administrative, or personal perspective, all spoke on behalf of the *harkis* they had been in charge of. In the mouths of these men, the *harkis* lost much of their agency, while the complexities of their various

⁵⁶⁵ 'Les harkis', *Planète chaude* (3 episodes), aired 12 December 1993 to 8 November 1994, (Channel 3).

⁵⁶⁶ 'Les harkis: 1. L'enrôlement', aired 12 December 1993.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ 'Les harkis: 2. L'abandon', aired 19 December 1993.

combatant statuses were erased, replaced with a monolithic image of a community of victims betrayed French politicians. The documentary therefore comprises two separate narrative strands that run parallel to each other, in many ways mirroring the confusion within the *harki* associational movement as it continued to struggle to disentangle its own voice from those of more established narratives and spokespeople.

By 2000, the *harkis* were receiving regular media coverage, a trend that has accelerated even more in the wake of high profile events such as Bouteflika's state visit, the establishment of a Journée nationale d'hommage aux harkis, and the controversy surrounding Loi 2005-158. Again, this coverage combined new and old formats, tropes, and participants. One significant contemporary development has been the appearance of programmes made by *filis* and *filles de harkis*, such as *Le mouchoir de mon père* in which Farid Haroud traced the history of his father and the *harkis* more generally using the leitmotif of a handkerchief on which his illiterate parent had sewn pictures expressing his experiences and feelings throughout the war.⁵⁶⁹ While the old guard of spokespeople from the *pied-noir* and military milieu are still present and still reiterating the same version of *harki* history, the balance of representation has tipped in favour of testimony from the *harki* community itself, with *filis* and *filles* assuming greater prominence. When external commentary is sought, the first point of call is increasingly academics such as Benjamin Stora, Mohand Hamoumou, and Giles Manceron.

What has not changed is the absence of the *harkis* themselves. When they do feature it is almost always in the context of news reports relating to nationally significant events such as the Journée nationale. Those interviewed are almost always *in situ*, offering sound bite comments from the now abandoned *centres d'accueil*, or the very few camps that remain inhabited. Given the rarity and brevity of these opportunities, the picture presented is highly selective with contributions gravitating around the themes of previous loyal service to France, the lack of choice when enrolling, betrayal at the end of the war and suffering since 1962.⁵⁷⁰ 'Alors je viens souffrir ici à cause de la France' one *harki* told the camera, 'J'ai perdu une jambe, un bras. J'ai fait deux guerres...la Tunisie et l'Algérie...Et après je suis venu là, comme un clochard'.⁵⁷¹ *Harkis* are never seen inside television studios or in any formal setting. In 1999, *Place de la République* dedicated an episode to the three-month long 'marche contre l'oubli' from Amiens to Paris that had been undertaken, somewhat unusually, by a contingent of *harkis* under their own initiative. Footage from the march itself included emotional testimonies from the marchers explaining how they had 'suivi le drapeau de France jusqu'au bout'. Yet when it came to the studio portion of the programme assessing the impact

⁵⁶⁹ 'Le mouchoir de mon père', *La case de l'oncle doc*, aired 21 September 2002 (Channel 3).

⁵⁷⁰ See, for example, 'La mémoire des harkis', *Édition nationale*, aired 30 August 2001 (Fr3).

⁵⁷¹ *La guerre d'Algérie: malentendu ou absurdité?*, aired 9 September 1990 (Channel 3).

of the march, these men were nowhere to be seen and were instead represented by their children with the thrust of the discussion centred around whether the children had fully ‘assumed’ the ‘choice’ of their fathers.⁵⁷² Even programmes that deliberately sought to give the microphone to the actors themselves, such as *Harkis: des français entièrement à part?*, end up with more testimony from the second than the first generation, thus attesting to the ongoing difficulty of accessing unmediated *harki* recollections, despite the more conducive climate of recent years.⁵⁷³

The Prominence of Individuals

As already highlighted, the heterogeneity of their associational movement meant that the *harkis* were not able to benefit from a single, pre-eminent figurehead capable of uniting the community and acting as a mediator. It was particularly unfortunate that this situation coincided with the heightened media profile of the community, which demanded just such a personality to embody the collective experiences of the *harkis* and capitalise on the unprecedented level of interest being shown towards them. Yet rather than a continuation of the pre-1990 trend whereby those external to the community assumed the role of *harki* ambassador, this combination of factors instead produced a new phenomenon whereby a succession of figures from within the *harki* community attracted the attention of the media who hastened to cast them as representative symbols of the *harki* population. However, as the following discussion will show, these men and women were in fact more representative of current and changing attitudes to the war and its legacies.

The Old School of Hacène Arfi and Abdelkrim Klech

The first people to obtain notoriety in this manner were *fils de harkis*, Hacène Arfi and Abdelkrim Klech. Both are of what could be termed the ‘old school’ of *harki* activism, despite the apparent irony of the phrase given the relative youth of the phenomenon. Obtaining their formative protest experiences in the summer of 1991, both men have remained within this action-orientated, grassroots tradition. At the older end of the second generation spectrum, they remain strongly rooted in their community and have not enjoyed, despite their public profiles, the sort of socio-economic advancement that many younger *fils de harkis* have been able to benefit from. Their trajectories and circumstances are therefore similar to those of the men and women on whose behalf they speak. Emerging during the early stages of the ‘médiatisation’ of the *harkis*, their celebrity was an unexpected by-product

⁵⁷² *Place de la République*, aired 26 January 1999 (Fr2).

⁵⁷³ ‘Harkis: des français entièrement à part?’, *Contre courant*, aired 25 April 2003 (Fr2).

and never the primary intention behind their activism. Despite not seeking the fame they acquired, both men were quick to appreciate its benefits in terms raising the profile of their cause. They thus accepted the mantle of *harki* spokesperson and have proven tireless and eloquent advocates for their parents and their contemporaries. Along with Ferdi, they were the dominant ‘faces’ of the *harki* community and the outside world’s link to this group during the 1990s

Born in 1957, Hacène Arfi’s family fled Algeria in 1962 after his father was attacked by the FLN. Passing briefly through Rivesaltes before ending up in the Saint Maurice l’Ardoise camp, the young Hacène witnessed scenes that he later described as ‘atroce’.⁵⁷⁴ His own experiences of camp life were little better causing him, aged eleven, to slip under the barbed wire and run away for three days. ‘Quand je suis rentré’ he told *L’Express* in 1997, ‘je croyais être allé en Belgique. En fait, j’avais dormi à 100 mètres du camp’.⁵⁷⁵ Like many of his generational cohort, Arfi grew into a bored and frustrated adolescent who, unable to find work, ‘boit et se bat du matin au soir dans les bars’.⁵⁷⁶ It was only upon finding employment in the forestry service at the age of twenty-two that his sense of injustice was ignited. He initially tried writing a book about his family’s trajectory, but found that the more he wrote the more he was opening old wounds and so abandoned the project in favour of taking practical action. This included occupying the prefecture of Marseille armed with three fake grenades upon learning that the army planned to sell the land on which Saint Maurice l’Ardoise had stood to the French government for a single symbolic franc.⁵⁷⁷

However, it was his role during the 1991 protests that really catapulted Arfi into the national media spotlight as he was broadcast nightly across French news leading bands of *fil*s as they vented their frustrations following decades of neglect and broken promises. Arfi subsequently stated that his actions were motivated by the desire to give ‘un coup de pied dans la fourmilière des associations’ in a bid to bring forth new leaders from the younger generation and to achieve coordination between groups.⁵⁷⁸ The first of his wishes was certainly granted as Arfi quickly became ‘une personnalité avec laquelle il faut savoir compter et même négocier’, evidenced by his invitation to join the delegation assembled by the government to discuss measures to address the plight of the *harkis*. Yet unlike Larradji in 1975, Arfi also managed to continue to enjoy widespread support from within his own community, becoming, in the opinion of Laurent Muller, ‘l’un des rares porte-parole

⁵⁷⁴ Laurent Muller, *Le silence des harkis*, (Paris, 1999), p.53.

⁵⁷⁵ Dalila Kerchouche, ‘Hacène Arfi, fils de harki blessé à vie’, *L’Express*, 15 May 1997, p.136.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p.136.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p.136. There is some debate about the status of the grenades and also the root cause of his occupation with Laurent Muller recording that the grenades were genuine ones left over from the Second World War that Arfi discovered accidentally and that it was jury service in Aix which prompted his actions in Marseille. Muller, *Le silence*, p.54.

⁵⁷⁸ Cited in Hamoumou and Jordi, *Harkis*, p.41.

véritablement reconnus et appréciés d'un grand nombre de harkis de la première comme la seconde génération'.⁵⁷⁹ This is possibly because Arfi's 'fame' did not alter his material conditions. He continues to live a stone's throw from the former site of Saint Maurice l'Ardoise in the community of Saint Laurent des Arbres, alongside many other *harki* families from the camp. The extreme edge of his activism has mellowed over time, but he remains firmly committed to the *harki* cause and has coordinated several commemorative endeavours including organising his own 'hommage aux harkis' ceremony in 1992, which saw a commemorative plaque erected on the former site of the Saint Maurice l'Ardoise camp. The plaque contains the phrase 'Rappelez-vous de ces hommes. Ils n'étaient pas un mythe', evoking a *devoir de mémoire* that Arfi feels compelled to ensure is honoured in his own lifetime as well as by future generations.⁵⁸⁰

This desire is one that he shares with fellow activist Abdelkrim Klech, frequently described as an 'icon' of the *harki* community for the longevity and the commitment of his campaigning. Klech, whose *modus operandi* of choice is the hunger strike, has commented with respect to his activism that: 'Je ferai en sorte que la mémoire reste, que mes enfants sachent....'⁵⁸¹ Born in 1953, Klech's childhood parallels Arfi's in many respects, although for him the humiliation and suffering of 'repatriation' crystallised around the experience of witnessing his father beaten and insulted as a 'traitor' in the street at the age of eleven. 'C'était la première fois que j'ai vu mon père pleurer, il a tombé des larmes' he later recalled.⁵⁸² Determined to restore the dignity of men like his father, Klech went on to combine sporadic employment with protest, including blockading the Marignane airport over the sacking of two *harki* employees in 1981 and spending two months obstructing the A96 as part of the 1991 protests.⁵⁸³ However, it is the multiple hunger strikes that Klech has conducted that have brought him the most attention. Over two decades he has organised ten such strikes, the last being in 2006 in response to Georges Frêche's categorisation of the *harkis* as 'sous-hommes'. His goal is to obtain justice, both material and moral, for all generations and to gain recognition of the fact that men such as his father were 'ni collabo, ni autre...il s'est battu à côté de la France pour défendre la salle de lui'.⁵⁸⁴ His commitment to his cause has resulted in his hospitalisation on numerous occasions, but he has vowed that he

⁵⁷⁹ Muller, *Le silence*, p.50.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid. p.226.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. p.92.

⁵⁸² *Harki: un traître mot*, aired 29 April 2002 (Fr5).

⁵⁸³ Cédric Alviani, 'Harki solitaire face au dôme des Invalides', *Libération*, 1 January 1998, p.18.

⁵⁸⁴ Klech's relationship with his father is a complex one. Although stating that he 'approved' of his father's decision to fight with the French to defend his home and family and having acknowledged that his father was not opposed to independence, Klech went on to say that he personally would have opted to fight with the FLN, albeit in a 'clean' manner. *Harki: un traître mot*, aired 29 April 2002.

will carry on ‘jusqu’au bout’, insisting that ‘Je suis prêt à mourir pour que le problème soit définitivement réglé’.⁵⁸⁵

New Faces: Dalila Kerchouche and Fatima Besnaci-Lancou

In the early 2000s, two new *harki* activists who were unusual in terms of background, trajectory, and style of activism eclipsed Arfi and Klech. Their appearance on the media’s radar coincided with the peak of attention devoted to the *harkis*, which in turn created a new set of circumstances, demands, and expectations on all sides. Emerging almost simultaneously, Dalila Kerchouche and Fatima Besnaci-Lancou presented a very different face of the *harki* community, not least because they were *filles de harkis* rather than *fil*s. Yet it was more than just their gender that distinguished them from previous spokespeople. Highly educated and socio-economically successful, both women have placed their activism within the remit of media-based advocacy rather than practical action. In choosing dialogue over demonstration, they have taken the links established by Arfi and Klech between their community and French society and built them into a veritable bridge. Indeed, *passerelle* is an apt term for Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou who seem able to cross over between these different groups with ease. Both their personalities and their style of activism suit the highly mediated climate in which the War of Independence is now discussed, a happy coincidence which has rendered their message accessible to an unprecedented portion of the French public they were seeking to connect with and inform.

The younger of the two women, Dalila Kerchouche, was born in 1973 in the Bias camp, although her family were to live there for only one more year before moving into their own house twelve years after first arriving in France. Benefiting from a more integrated childhood and a mainstream education, something denied to both Arfi and Klech who were educated inside the camps, Kerchouche went on to attend university and become a journalist for *L’Express* where she was tasked, among other topics, with covering the *harki* community. However, it was with the publication in 2003 of her memoir-cum-history, *Mon père, ce harki*, that she achieved greatest prominence. Kerchouche conceived of her book as a way to understand and thus reconnect with her father, a man she had worshipped as a child but who had become a virtual stranger to her as an adult on account of what she termed ‘ce passé trouble’.⁵⁸⁶ Her family history was also framed as a personal quest to discover and accept her own identity as a *fil*le de *harki*, a label she was often assigned but never knew how to react to. Over the course of the book she moves from defining herself as ‘une fille de harkis...avec un

⁵⁸⁵ Sylvia Zappi, ‘Grève de faim de deux fils de harkis pour que la France reconnaisse “ses fautes”’, *Le Monde*, 10 April 2000, p.10.

⁵⁸⁶ Dalila Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, (Paris, 2003), p.32.

petit “h” comme honte’, to the point where she is able to lay claim to the identity ‘fille de Harkis’, with ‘Un grand H, comme Honneur’.⁵⁸⁷

In spite of the intimate nature of much of the book, Kerchouche’s journalistic training is evident enabling *Mon père* also to serve as an informative history of the *harki* community. As Kerchouche herself wrote, ‘Alors qu’au départ je me pensais écrire qu’une histoire individuelle, je me rends compte que ce récit ressemble au parcours de milliers d’anonymes’.⁵⁸⁸ This productive duality has been maintained in her subsequent projects, including a novel and a television screenplay, which have targeted both academic and populist audiences in a bid to increase awareness and understanding of the *harkis*.⁵⁸⁹ All have proved popular with French audiences, a fact undoubtedly aided by Kerchouche’s numerous television appearances where she comes across as committed but also charming, lacking the aggression of *harki* spokespeople like Boussad Azni. Kerchouche is thus ideally placed to exploit the current media and public interest in the War of Independence in order to further her rehabilitation-through-education agenda.

Despite their different ages and approaches, Kerchouche shares with Arfi and Klech the determination to obtain recognition for her community. The death of her grandfather bringing her to the realisation that ‘Voilà ce qui attend les harkis: la mort et l’oubli si nous, les enfants, ne témoignons pas, si nous les laissons partir sans les écouter, sans leur parler, sans essayer de les comprendre’.⁵⁹⁰ All three also developed their consciousness of the need to take action at roughly the same stage in their lives, early adulthood. However, this was not the case for Fatima Besnaci-Lancou. Born in 1954, Besnaci-Lancou falls within the same age and experience bracket as Arfi and Klech, being just old enough to remember the suffering imposed by the war, as well as her family’s flight from Algeria. Once in France, Besnaci-Lancou spent her childhood in various camps, including Rivesaltes but, unlike Arfi and Klech, attained a high level of education and established her own small publishing house; embodying, in many respects, the ideal of successful integration so vaunted by the Republic. Also unlike Arfi and Klech, who have always strongly identified themselves with the preceding generation, Besnaci-Lancou deliberately chose not to allow her parents’ past to define her identity. ‘Jusqu’ici, je ne m’étais intéressée qu’épisodiquement à ma communauté’, she wrote in 2003. ‘Je ne voulais pas rester prisonnière d’une identité cloisonnée...Être harki, ce n’est pas héréditaire...Je ne veux pas que mon fils soit “petit-fils de harkis” avec tout le

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. pp.13, 195, 257.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. p.173.

⁵⁸⁹ For Kerchouche’s subsequent projects see *Destins de harkis: Aux racines d’un exil*, with Stéphan Gladieu (Paris, 2003); *Leïla: avoir dix-sept ans dans un camp de harkis*, (Paris, 2006); *Harkis*, aired 13 October 2006 (Fr2); ‘Amère patrie’, *Documents* x3, 13 October 2006 (Fr5).

⁵⁹⁰ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.53.

désespoir qui s'y attache'.⁵⁹¹ This changed, however, on 16 June 2000 when President Boutefflika infamously assimilated the status of the *harkis* in Algeria to that of 'collabos'. His remarks so offended Besnaci-Lancou that she immediately sat down and, 'presque d'un seul jet', wrote down her recollections of 'cette guerre sans nom, si longtemps refoulés (sic)'.⁵⁹² Although writing for her children in order to 'effacer l'honte et faire barrage à la haine', Besnaci-Lancou, like Kerchouche, quickly realised that her story had a far wider resonance. Acknowledging that hunger strikes, demonstrations, and even lawsuits are 'necessary', Besnaci-Lancou went on to specify that 'ce n'est pas ma démarche'.⁵⁹³ Instead, she like Kerchouche, has chosen to operate primarily through the medium of the written and spoken word.⁵⁹⁴ She has thus embraced, in her own way, the role of community representative assigned to her by the media.

Aside from her relative socio-economic prosperity and late-developing communal identification, Besnaci-Lancou stands apart from her generational cohort in another key respect: her relationship to Algeria. Besnaci-Lancou's discourse is broadly one of reconciliation towards her former homeland, professing early on in her memoir that 'Mon coeur a toujours battu au rythme de l'Algérie...Si j'avais milité, cela aurait été en faveur de l'émergence de la démocratie en Algérie'.⁵⁹⁵ Although highly critical of the FLN regime, both for its actions in 1962 and for its ongoing mistreatment of *harkis*, Besnaci-Lancou nonetheless concludes *Fille de harki* with the statement: 'Mon rêve le plus cher serait un rapprochement avec l'Algérie'.⁵⁹⁶ Besnaci-Lancou has also demonstrated her commitment to dialogue with Algeria and Algerians by participating in a commemoration of 17 October 1961 in the hope that both Algerians and *harkis* could 'assumer leur héritage dans la dignité et la fraternité' as part of a wider initiative 'pour la réappropriation des mémoires confisquées'.⁵⁹⁷

Another way in which Besnaci-Lancou has attempted to reach out and connect the *harkis* cause to other sectors of French society is through the association Harkis et Droits de

⁵⁹¹ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki: Le bouleversant témoignage d'une enfant de la guerre d'Algérie*, with Marie-Christine Ray, (Paris, 2005), p.17.

⁵⁹² Ibid. p.83. Besnaci-Lancou thus conforms to the reaction noted by Laurent Muller whereby when racism strikes 'l'un des leurs' the sense of belonging of those who normally distance themselves from the *harki* community comes to the fore. Laurent Muller, 'Les enfants de harkis et leurs parents: entre distance et proximité', *Cultures et Sociétés*, 4 (Winter 1994), 10.

⁵⁹³ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.119.

⁵⁹⁴ Besnaci-Lancou went on to produce two collections of testimony, *Treize chibanis harkis*, (Paris, 2006) and *Nos mères: paroles blessées: Une autre histoire de harkis*, (Léchelle, 2006); as well as a history of the *harkis* in collaboration with Gilles Manceron entitled *Les harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites*, (Paris, 2008).

⁵⁹⁵ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.17.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. p.119.

⁵⁹⁷ 'Des enfants de harkis et d'immigrés commémorant samedi le 17 octobre 1961', *AFP Infos Françaises*, 13 October 2004. Her stance was not, however, appreciated by all with one 1961 demonstrator, Mohamed Barka, telling reporters 'Les harkis n'ont pas leur place ici. Je serais fils de harki, j'aurais honte d'être venu'. 'Commémoration du 17 octobre 1961', *AFP Infos Françaises*, 16 October 2004.

l'Homme of which she is the president. Orientated very much toward the dissemination of information, the group aims to 'mettre en oeuvre tout travail d'histoire et de mémoire, sous l'ongle des droits de l'homme, pour faire connaître l'histoire des harkis'.⁵⁹⁸ Close collaboration with the Ligue des droits de l'Homme gives Besnaci-Lancou's organisation an anchor in communities outside of the *harkis* and also epitomises her *passerelle* status, an attribute Kerchouche also possesses. With a foot in each camp as it were, both women are able to move, apparently seamlessly, between their own communities and wider French society. Indeed, both have openly expressed their attachment to France without denying their origins, something that Arfi and Klech have never done. This has enabled them to make the *harkis* seem less 'other', an ability enhanced by the narratives they present which, although emblematic of wider collective experiences, are based very much at the level of the individual and the human.

Interestingly, the most distinctive attribute of Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou, their gender, is actually the least commented upon, although it is noticeable that they have done more than any other activists to open up space to allow the wives and widows of *harkis* to tell their stories. While Arfi has made reference to females as a neglected group in the *harki* narrative, remarking 'ce serait bien qu'il n'y ait pas qu'un soldat', no one prior to Besnaci-Lancou had taken the next logical step and actively sought out their memories.⁵⁹⁹ *Nos mères* is a conscious corrective to this historical imbalance prompted by the reaction to her first book after which many women came up to her to say: 'Tu vois ma fille, moi si je savais écrire mille pages ne suffiraient pas à raconter toutes les misères que j'ai subies depuis la guerre d'Algérie jusqu'au maintenant'.⁶⁰⁰ Kerchouche clearly shares her sentiments, for despite the title *Mon père*, her mother plays an equally central role in the tale. Kerchouche also used *Destins de harkis* to make the point that 'Si le drame des harkis commence à sortir de l'ombre depuis quelques années, le drame de leurs épouses indiffère. Si les hommes ont été bafoués, leurs femmes l'ont été encore plus'.⁶⁰¹ Both women have used their privileged insider positions to access testimony that has eluded other researchers and present it to the general public in the hope that it will not only raise awareness of the complexity of the *harki* experience, but also help 'les autres femmes issues "des guerres" ou "de l'exil" à déposer un jour leur fardeau'.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁸ www.harki.net [2 August 2008]

⁵⁹⁹ Muller, *Le silence*, p.227. The exception to this is Farida Hamak's *Ma mère: histoire d'une immigration*, (Paris, 2004). However, the reader does not learn that the family in question are *harkis* until late in the narrative and the book is presented as a story of immigration, rather than as a history of the *harki* community.

⁶⁰⁰ Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères*, p.19.

⁶⁰¹ Gladieu and Kerchouche, *Destins de harkis*, p.91.

⁶⁰² Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères*, p.20.

A further under-explored aspect of the *harki* experience raised by Kerchouche in particular is the question of generation. Although the basic distinction between a first and a second generation remains valid, certainly with respect to activism, the coherence of the so-called 'second generation' may need to be reconfigured. For example, although Kerchouche is technically, and indeed defines herself as, a *filles de harki*, the fact that she was born over a decade after the end of the war and was the only one of her nine siblings to grow up outside of the camps sets her apart: 'Amers et moquers, mes frères et soeurs plus âgés traitent souvent de 'privilégiée'. Eux ont connu les 'camps'. Pas moi. Eux ont souffert. Pas moi. Cette existence très leur a trempé le caractère. J'en ai été préservée'.⁶⁰³ *Mon père* is in part her response to this sense of exclusion: 'J'aimerais pourtant, à travers ce livre, abolir cette frontière avec les miens, toucher du doigt ce passé que je n'ai pas vécu. Pour me sentir, enfin, membre de ma famille à part entière'.⁶⁰⁴

The Kerchouche family therefore arguably functions as a microcosm of the various factors, including age, experiences, relative degrees of success, and integration that have prevented *harki* activists developing a cohesive and united front at the associational level. It also gives Kerchouche's *passerelle* status an internal as well as external significance since she stands at the crossroads, not only between her community and the rest of French society, but also between the second and third generations. What she represents is the emergence of an issue that the *pied-noir* community have increasingly been forced to face: how to transmit history and memory to those who have no direct experience of the events in question? The role of the camps and forestry hamlet as symbolic collective experiences helped mute the division between *fils* and *filles* born in France and those born in Algeria, thus maintaining a sense of generation cohesion. Additionally, although there remains much to do to fully integrate the *harki* community, significant advances have been made since the 1960s, which raises the question of how to ensure an ongoing activist commitment from the *petit fils* and *filles de harkis*, especially if there is little in their material condition that connects them to their parents' and grandparents past? More mediators like Kerchouche who are simultaneously inside and outside the community they speak on behalf of therefore seems inevitable even though it represents a further step away from the voices of the first generation.

Boussad Azni and the judicial turn

Eclipsing these relatively subtle evolutions in the activism of the *fils* and *filles de harkis* is the controversial strategy of pursuing recognition and recompense through the courts, a move spearheaded by Boussad Azni through the Comité national de liaison des harkis (CNLH).

⁶⁰³ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.25.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. p.25.

Although Azni shares with his fellow activists the desire to restore dignity to their parents by making their history more widely known and understood, believing that ‘un peuple n’est rien s’il n’a pas de mémoire’, the primary focus of his activism has been the judicial system.⁶⁰⁵ To this end, on 30 August 2001 his association registered a lawsuit against X for crimes against humanity with respect to the treatment of the *harkis* at the end of the war.⁶⁰⁶ All involved are keen to stress that it is not a case of obtaining ‘condemnation’, but rather gaining recognition of the fact that ‘à un certain moment de son histoire, la cinquième République a forfait à l’honneur, au courage, et à l’humanité. Et que l’Algérie moderne, née de la guerre, s’est baptisée avec le sang des harkis’.⁶⁰⁷ The content of the lawsuit thus concentrates primarily on the atrocities committed in the summer of 1962 and the lasting suffering they produced. It also emphasises the patriotism of the *harkis*, making frequent reference to the ‘dette de sang’ in order to place the *harkis* within an *ancien combattant* continuum with the logical corollary that the *harkis* were entitled to the same protection and rights as veterans of previous conflicts.⁶⁰⁸ The main thrust of the *plainte* is therefore the failure of France to honour this duty of care, which allows the crime against humanity charge to be levelled at France on the basis of non-assistance to people in danger.

‘Crime contre l’humanité vous semble exagéré?’ Azni asks towards the end of his book. ‘Mais comment appeler autrement le massacre concerté, réalisé à grand échelle, d’une population déterminée sur des critères précis d’appartenance à un corps constitué ou d’opinion?’⁶⁰⁹ Beyond convincing his readers of the validity of defining these acts as crimes against humanity, Azni faces the more difficult challenge of convincing the courts that this is also the case. The spate of trials of former Vichy officials in the 1980s and 1990s prompted the definition of a crime against humanity to be amended in 1985, 1992, 1995, and 1997. These modifications were arguably designed to confine its application to the Second World War and prevent this charge, the only one to benefit from the status of imprescriptibility, being brought with respect to the War of Independence, especially after Maître Vergès’ defence of Klaus Barbie.⁶¹⁰ Azni is aware that he faces an uphill struggle because of what he regards as the ‘interprétation très restrictive’ currently in place. He nonetheless remains

⁶⁰⁵ Boussad Azni, *Harkis, crime d’État: Généalogie d’un abandon*, (Paris, 2002), p.39

⁶⁰⁶ In many respects Azni’s book, which appeared the following year, can be read as an extended presentation of the case he and his lawyer put to the court. In particular there are approximately twenty pages of eyewitness testimony and a lengthy evidential appendix consisting of reproductions of official documents. Even the title, *Harkis, crime d’État*, has a legalistic resonance.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid, pp.8, 25.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid. p.25.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. pp.147-148. Although not an official part of the suit, Azni believes that the charge is equally applicable to way the French state treated the *harkis* in France, viewing the Bias camp where he grew up as part of a deliberate government plan to eradicate the *harkis* because they were living reminders of France’s humiliation and shame in Algeria. See Ibid. pp.103-119.

⁶¹⁰ Vergès’ strategy involved trying to turn the focus away from Barbie’s crimes and onto ‘war crimes’ committed by France in her colonies after 1945, especially in Algeria.

confident that his evidence fulfils the criteria of the ‘pratique massive et systématique d’exécutions, tortures, ou enlèvements’, as part of the enactment of ‘un plan concerté’.⁶¹¹ This will only be sufficient if he can also prove that these actions were carried out ‘au nom d’un État pratiquant une politique d’hégémoine idéologique’, the crucial additional stipulation in French law.⁶¹²

It is possible to argue that the symbolic value of the *plainte* is more important than the actual outcome. Azni’s actions have garnered an enormous amount of media coverage for the *harki* community, including an extended treatment in the documentary *Harkis; le crime*.⁶¹³ It is also true that the morally and historically loaded phrase ‘crime contre l’humanité’, especially in a post-Pinochet, post-Milosevic world makes for a potent emblem and mobilisation tool. This is augmented by Azni’s evocations of the ‘devoir de mémoire’, another increasingly loaded term in contemporary France, represented by the suit. Between *médiatisation*, moralisation, and mobilisation, the *harki* cause in Azni’s hands has reached new heights of notoriety, regardless of the eventual decision.⁶¹⁴

Biographically, Azni has most in common with Arfi and Klech having experienced camp life, struggled with his identity, and fallen briefly into delinquency before discovering activism. Yet although he departs from his generational cohort in his style of activism, by focusing on the judicial system as the best means of obtaining recognition for the history of the *harkis* Azni joins a rapidly growing trend with respect not only to the Algerian War, but history and memory more generally in France. The idea of employing the legal system in the quest for recognition and recompense appears to have first been mooted within the *harki* community in the early 1990s with *Le Monde* reporting that the ‘nouveau combat’ of Arfi following the summer of 1991 had been to engage the lawyer Maître Gilbert Collard to look into the possibility of bringing a case against the French and Algerian authorities for crimes against humanity, although even then it was appreciated that ‘Ce sera dur’.⁶¹⁵ This tactic has however, also been utilised by numerous other memory carriers connected to the war. In addition Vértias’ legal pursuit of General Katz, the Mouvement contre le racismisme et pour

⁶¹¹ Azni, *Harkis*, p.155.

⁶¹² For further information on the evolution of the law see Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris, 2005), pp.111-114. Azni can perhaps draw succour from parliament’s decision in 2001 to accord the treatment of black slaves the label ‘crime contre l’humanité’. See <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000405369&dateTexte=>. [3 August 2008].

⁶¹³ *Harkis: le crime*, aired 12 February 2002.

⁶¹⁴ In 2003 a new suit was lodged by a select group of *harkis* under the direction of Azni and the CNLH against Pierre Messmer, Minister of the Armies during the war. This tactic also appears not to have harmed Azni’s career prospects as he was named Conseiller pour le Monde Combattant, les Harkis et la Citoyenneté by the Secretary of State for Veterans in 2007.

⁶¹⁵ François Xavier Reymond, ‘Un an après la révolte des enfants de harkis. Le nouveau combat de Hacène’, *Le Monde*, 25 July 1992, p 7. No reference to the outcome of Maître Collard’s actions could be found.

l'amitié entre les peuples (MRAP) supported Louissette Ighilahriz in her suit relating to the torture to which she was subjected to at the hands of the French army, while the children of Larbi Ben M'hidi, the FLN leader tortured to death by paratroopers in 1957, have made a similar representation to the courts. Finally, another 'plainte contre X' has been lodged regarding the French state's role in the events of 17 October 1961. This ever lengthening list has prompted Branche to observe that the French courts are rapidly becoming *the* privileged site for discussions of this particular aspect of France's past'.⁶¹⁶ For Rouso, this trend is a clear offshoot of Annette Wieviorka's 'ère de témoin', particularly the ascendancy of victimhood as a valued status:

La figure du héros s'estompe peu à peu au profit de celle de la victime, et l'affrontement entre anciens adversaires ne porte plus sur la question de savoir jusqu'à quel point les uns et les autres menaient une guerre aux fins 'justes' - avec des moyens et des conséquences, à qui le furent rarement - mais sur leur capacité à se présenter comme des victimes.⁶¹⁷

Indeed, the preface to *Harkis, crime d'État* defines the goal of both the book and the lawsuit as 'Leur rendre leur identité, expliquer les circonstances de leur mort, c'était le moyen de leur attribuer leur véritable statut, celui de victimes'.⁶¹⁸

When tracing the origins of this changed mentality most academics point to the impact of the Vichy syndrome, particularly its judicial dimension. The trials of Barbie, Touvier, and Papon are deemed to have led many within the *harki* community to hope for a similar remedy for their own grievances, namely judgement rendered on those they regard as to blame for their situation combined with an official state apology to redress the historical record.⁶¹⁹ This was particularly true of the Papon case where the two wars were conflated within a single individual, validating the idea that these two unique periods in history were somehow comparable.⁶²⁰ It is certainly a connection made frequently by the media, the voiceover to *Harkis: le crime* concluding, 'Ce que les juifs ont demandé, les harkis, comme d'autres victimes de l'histoire le demande aujourd'hui'.⁶²¹ Furthermore, Azni's rhetoric not

⁶¹⁶ Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.111.

⁶¹⁷ Henry Rouso, 'La guerre d'Algérie et la culture de la mémoire', *Le Monde*, 5 April 2002.

⁶¹⁸ Azni, *Harkis*, p.8. Although recourse to the courts can be construed as an example of the *harkis* reclaiming agency by taking their own destiny in hand, in another sense it risks ghettoising the community by assigning them the legally enshrined, blanket status of victims. In light of the efforts and time taken to escape from the 'carcan idéologique' of being either traitors or patriots, to return to an all-encompassing communal definition seems a reductive backwards step.

⁶¹⁹ William B. Cohen, 'The *Harkis*: History and Memory' in *Algeria and France 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. by Patricia M.E. Lorcin, (New York, 2006), p.178.

⁶²⁰ The problems with such a comparison are outlined by Branche in *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.95.

⁶²¹ *Harkis: le crime*, aired 12 February 2002.

only makes direct reference to the precedent set by Vichy, but does so in language framed around the concepts of persecution and genocide that is strongly reminiscent of that which accompanied the reawakening of Jewish memory in the 1970s.⁶²² Remarking on the employment offered by the government to the *harkis* while they were in the camps, Azni states, ‘Comment disaient les Allemands? “Arbeit macht frei”, le travail rend libre, c’était écrit au-dessus de la porte d’entrée, à Buchenwald’.⁶²³ The contemporary international situation has also clearly influenced the way in which this courtroom-based quest is conceived of and justified, with the vice-president of Justice pour les harkis explaining to reporters on the day Azni lodged his suit, ‘Quand on voit Pinochet bloqué en Angleterre, Ariel Sharon poursuivi par une Palestinienne en Belgique, Milosevic à La Haye, nous, les harkis, on est en plein dedans’.⁶²⁴ However, although international precedents are important, it seems that their principal role has been to add further weight and wider contemporary resonance to a pre-existing vocabulary that was developed as a result of the Vichy trials which remain the main reference point in terms of the practical result that is being sought by activists like Azni.

More than obtaining the condemnation of one party or another, Branche views these legal processes as ‘plus radicalement et plus simplement’ about getting a certain aspect of the past recognized officially ‘comme ayant été’.⁶²⁵ Yet despite the coincidence between this and Azni’s ostensible protestations, it is evident that more than mere recognition is at stake here. ‘Car nous visons’, Azni’s *plainte* reads, ‘à démontrer la collusion de la France gaulliste et de l’Algérie benbelliste, au nom des intérêts économiques et stratégiques particuliers, ont délibérément sacrifié une population entière’.⁶²⁶ That is to say, as well as recognition, they want responsibility to be assigned and for that assignation to be given a legal stamp of legitimacy so that the final word falls in their favour. This impetus is something that Branche herself implicitly recognizes when she later quotes Resistance specialist Robert Berlot’s observation that:

Le recours au procès est devenu, dans la perception collective, le moyen naturel d’écrire l’histoire de nos événements douloureux, parce qu’on imagine qu’il sera ainsi possible d’objectiver et de figer cette écriture dans une ultime sentence insusceptible d’aucun recours, ce qui apaisera d’un coup nos questionnements et nos inquiétudes.⁶²⁷

⁶²² *Harkis: le crime*, aired 12 February 2002; Cohen, ‘The *Harkis*’, pp.176-177. Although Cohen’s observation referred to the *harki* community in general, it seems particularly appropriate to Azni.

⁶²³ Azni, *Harkis*, p.79.

⁶²⁴ Cited in Michel Henry, ‘Les fils de harkis s’interrogent’, *Libération*, 30 August 2001, p.4.

⁶²⁵ Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie*, p.99.

⁶²⁶ Azni, *Harkis*, p.147.

⁶²⁷ Robert Berlot, ‘Préface’ in Francis Jeanson, *Notre guerre*, (Paris, 2001), p.9. Also cited in Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie*, p.138.

This was also what was expected of the Vichy trials and the same thorny issues pertaining to the vast differences between the disciplines of history and the law that plagued those trials will also arise if Azni's case ever reaches a courtroom.⁶²⁸

However, even before his *plainte* makes it that far, it has already affected the history and memory of the *harki* community in several important ways. In the first instance, the mere act of collating evidence to form a suit alters the historical record by restructuring the testimony of which it is composed, imposing neat divisions and categories onto the past in order to support a particular narrative structure. This inevitably happens with all accounts, but the very specific end to which this particular re-telling is directed and the potential for the interpretation it presents to become enshrined in law magnifies both the distortions and their ramifications. Conforming to the restrictive format of the legal process which aims essentially to render one of two possible verdicts, the story presented by Azni is by necessity less nuanced than that articulated in the works of Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou. Instead of the complicated allegiances of Kerchouche's father who aided the FLN while also serving as an auxiliary, in Azni's rendering 'la France était tout' for the *harkis*.⁶²⁹ In contrast to the complex past evoked by Kerchouche, the divisions between heroes and villains, perpetrators and victims, have to be drawn more clearly by Azni because this is the intended end result of the lawsuit. The danger is clearly that diversity and detail will be sacrificed as evidence is marshaled in the service of a master narrative that has to appear both coherent and definitive in order to succeed in its objectives. Indeed, this can already be seen in some of the objections that have been raised to the legalistic strategy on the basis that it is too blunt an instrument to do justice to the intricate history of the *harkis*. '[L]a question harki a surtout besoin de nuances', one *fils de harki* told reporters when asked his opinion of Azni's actions.⁶³⁰ He went on to argue, as others have done, that pointing the finger solely at France, because it is not possible to point it at Algeria through the French courts, risks confusing the issue; after all it was the FLN who ultimately carried out the 1962 massacres, not the French army.⁶³¹ The historical record is thus artificially distorted by the removal of important context in order to fit the strictures of the French legal system.

A related issue is the manner in which evidence was gathered to support the charges being brought. Although the veracity of the testimony of the various plaintiffs is not being questioned, the environment in which these accounts were collected was very different to the

⁶²⁸ Perhaps the most succinct summary of the difference is Branche's definition of justice as 'figée, définitive, simplifiée' compared to history which she views as 'évaluative, révisable, complexe'. Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.138.

⁶²⁹ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.254; Azni, *Harkis*, p.154.

⁶³⁰ Farid Haroud cited in Henry, 'Les fils de harkis', p.4.

⁶³¹ Ibid. p.4.

way one imagines Besnaci-Lancou approached contributors to *Nos mères*. Particularly interesting in this regard is a section of *Harkis: le crime* that shows Azni holding a public meeting in the Bias camp to address those who were part of the original suit. Standing on stage, Azni acknowledges that many in the audience have never previously spoken of their experiences. He then turns to the *harki* standing next to him and says: ‘Je crois c’est ton devoir, Badji, de dire ici, publiquement les tortures et comment tu as été torturé’. Badji haltingly does as he is told, recalling with great emotion how ‘Ils m’ont passé une broche ici, jusqu’à l’os, elle est sortie dans la bouche... Les doigts coupés, la tête tendue, l’épaule cassée, les tortures sans cesse...’ As Badji is escorted off the stage at the end of his testimony he is trembling and crying while the audience applauds.⁶³² The subtext of this exchange is that it is a duty incumbent upon the individual to make public their private memories for the communal good, regardless of the personal trauma involved. The inclusion of an element of compulsion represents a clear evolution of the oft-invoked notion of a *devoir de mémoire* that the *pied-noir* community uses to legitimate much of its activism. Instead of simply a potent rhetorical framing device, the above example suggests the potential for imbuing the sense of obligation inherent in the phrase with a practical, performative dimension, making the ‘duty’ something that can be imposed upon someone in a tangible sense. Such a development may indeed result in access to previously unspoken testimony, such as that provided by Badji, but at what price to history and memory, not to mention to the individuals in question? It also raises the uncomfortable question of manipulation. Azni clearly has an agenda that he believes all *harkis* do, or should, subscribe to and he is using his authority as a spokesperson to obtain a hearing for that agenda at the highest levels. But to what extent do the *harkis* who are participating in his lawsuit share his vision of their past and the ends to which he is seeking to direct it?

Azni has defended his combative style of activism, claiming ‘Nous sommes, pour nous, encore en guerre’.⁶³³ This formulation, which is strongly reminiscent of that employed by *pied-noir* associations, especially from the late 1990s onwards, has drawn criticism, most notably from Benjamin Stora. Azni and Stora, two men endowed with strong personalities, clashed over precisely this issue during an emission of *C dans l’air* dedicated to the war.⁶³⁴ While discussing the importance of not replicating animosities from a war that ended four decades ago, Stora made reference to Azni’s ‘combat’ for recognition of the ‘tragedy’ of the *harkis*. Although Stora described Azni’s efforts as ‘admirable’, he went on to argue that the central issue was to move beyond ‘perpetual accusations’ so as to illuminate the past without moralising it, or casting it as a continual battle out of which can emerge only one victor;

⁶³² *Harkis: le crime*, aired 12 February 2002.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ ‘Les cicatrices françaises’, *C dans l’air*, aired 12 March 2002 (Fr5).

essentially making the case he has made elsewhere for a progression from memory into history to be undertaken by all sides. Azni countered that he saw ‘history’ as gaining recognition of the fact that his father, and by implication Azni as well, were not traitors and that the ‘real’ traitors were those in power on the other side of the Mediterranean; a tellingly black and white response to the shades of grey being advocated by Stora.⁶³⁵

Combining Activism and Academia: Mohand Hamoumou

However, not all *harki* spokespeople have such rigid stances. An interesting case in point is Mohand Hamoumou. Having both authored a thesis and founded a *harki* association, Hamoumou appears to bridge the gap between activism and academia that divides Azni from Stora. Although this duality is one Hamoumou has sought to exploit productively by capitalising on the unique status and opportunities it affords him, his position is not always a comfortable one.

Born in 1956 in Sétif into a family which, like many at the time, contained both *harkis* and FLN militants, Hamoumou’s *harki* father was killed the same year. Repatriated with the remainder of his family to France, Hamoumou shared the experience of growing up in various camps with his fellow activists, later remarking, ‘Quand j’étais petit, j’ai connu les joies du camping dans le Larzac’.⁶³⁶ Yet unlike Arfi, Klech, and Azni, Hamoumou attended university where he submitted a thesis in 1989, later published as the widely acclaimed *Et ils sont devenus harkis*. His ‘ascension remarquable’ made him the epitome for the ideal model of *harki* integration and success, although he is only one of several *fils de harkis* who have emerged from higher education as analysts of their own communities, other notable examples being Nordine Boulhaïs and Saliha Abdellatif.⁶³⁷ Yet Hamoumou has also chosen to combine the critical distance of academia with the *engagement* of practical activism. He thus created Association, Justice, Information, Réparation (AJIR) in 1998 by federating three pre-existing *harki* groups.⁶³⁸ The goal of AJIR is to ‘faire connaître l’histoire des Harkis et convaincre les décideurs politiques de passer de l’assistanat à la réparation matérielle et morale puis à la pleine intégration politique’.⁶³⁹ Their gaze is also future orientated as indicated by their

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Cited in Céline Guiral, ‘Une mémoire à fleur de peau’, *Le Progrès*, 24 June 2005, p.21,

⁶³⁷ The phrase is taken from a biography provided by Maurice Faivre in *Un village de harkis*, p.133. It is indicative of the high regard in which both veterans and *pieds-noirs* hold Hamoumou upon whom they lavish praise. Interestingly, while there are plenty of women who study the *harkis*, there has yet to be a *filles de harki* who has chosen this path and attained the same degree of success as the above mentioned scholars.

⁶³⁸ www.harkis.com [28 June 2008].

⁶³⁹ www.harkis.com/article.php3?id_article=41 [28 June 2008].

commitment to developing ‘un esprit de solidarité et fraternité’ within the *harki* community in the hope of fostering dialogue and thus ‘encourager la transmission de la mémoire’.⁶⁴⁰

Hamoumou’s academic background has bolstered his credentials as an activist, certainly in the eyes of those beyond the *harki* community. Operating in several spheres simultaneously has also afforded Hamoumou a *passerelle* function similar to that enjoyed by Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou, although his influence extends further than theirs in that he also serves as a privileged interlocutor between the *harkis* community and the French state. In language highly reminiscent of the attributes accorded to Jacques Roseau, *Le Progrès* offered the following description of him: ‘Médiatique, charismatique, Mohand Hamoumou apparaît aujourd’hui comme l’homme de la situation pour porter ce combat [des harkis] au plus près des instances politiques’.⁶⁴¹

Yet Hamoumou’s academic-activist status is not without its problems. As a scholar of the *harki* community, Hamoumou is dedicated to breaking with the simplified myths of previous eras. ‘Il est temps’, he informed readers of *Le Figaro*, ‘de refuser mythes et mystifications et de reconnaître la complexité d’une guerre civile enracinée dans l’histoire coloniale pour comprendre qui étaient les harkis, et ce que fut leur calvaire’.⁶⁴² Yet as an activist, he is motivated by a sense of personal commitment to obtain justice for his community. These two facets of his personality do not always sit comfortably together. For example, although Hamoumou supports Azni’s lawsuit as a necessary ‘nouveau moyen d’action’ since demonstrations and hunger strikes ‘n’ont pas suffi à obtenir juste réparation’, he is wary of the danger of making ‘généralisations hâtives et abusives’, such as targeting the French state when ‘Ce n’est pas la France qui a commis ces massacres, mais le pouvoir algérien de l’époque’.⁶⁴³ Although he admits ‘Il est malheureux que nous soyons réduits à utiliser les tribunaux comme tribunes’, Hamoumou has yet to fully distance himself from this course of action because of its negative implications for historical understanding in the manner that Stora has publicly done. Hamoumou is thus indicative of only one of the many tensions and contradictions that have emerged as *harki* activism has evolved since 1991.

⁶⁴⁰ http://www.harkis.com/article.php3?id_article=42 [28 June 2008].

⁶⁴¹ Guiral, ‘Une mémoire’, p.21. In another interesting parallel with Roseau, there is definitely a degree of tension between Hamoumou and Azni, possibly attributable, beyond simple difference of opinion over strategy, to Azni’s desire to be *the* community spokesperson through which the government negotiates. Given Azni’s recent appointment as Conseiller pour les Harkis, it will be interesting to see how their relationship evolves.

⁶⁴² Mohand Hamoumou, ‘Les harkis, un trou de mémoire franco-algérien’, *Esprit*, 161 (May 1990), 32.

⁶⁴³ Cited in Henry, ‘Les fils de harkis’, p.4.

Commemoration and the State

Waiting for a 'geste officielle'

In spite of differences in age, background and approach, all the aforementioned spokespeople are united in their belief that the moral and material recognition they demand on behalf of the *harki* community needs to be accompanied by some kind of official gesture. Besnaci-Lancou has spoken of the need for 'une geste plus forte...comme pour la communauté juive', while Hamoumou has publicly called for 'une loi par laquelle la République, une et indivisible, assumerait, d'une part, la responsabilité de l'État de 1962... [et] d'autre part, s'engagerait à évaluer et à réparer les préjudices subis, tant matériels que moraux'.⁶⁴⁴ The model is clearly Chirac's speech of 16 July 1995 commemorating the Vel d'Hiv *raffles* in which he directly acknowledged the role played by the French state in the deportation of tens of thousands of Jews during the Second World War with the words 'Oui, la folie criminelle de l'occupant a été secondée par des Français, par l'Etat français'.⁶⁴⁵

Key to this is the notion of responsibility since acknowledgement from Chirac that the *harkis* served France loyally and were thus owed a 'dette d'honneur' has not proven sufficient to satisfy activists. Rather than simply a passive acceptance that these events occurred, they continue to demand affirmation of the active role played by the French state in these acts. Although different to Azni's quest, both calls stem from the same concern to obtain some form of official, and thus nationally legitimated, support for a particular reading of the past. This is reflective of a wider evolution within French commemorative culture whereby the perception has grown that only concrete gestures made at the highest levels are capable of 'panseur les plaies toujours ouvertes d'une société française malade de sa guerre d'Algérie', in the same way that such a belief became anchored with respect to the Vichy period.⁶⁴⁶ Robert Berlot, although giving this phenomenon a much wider application, nonetheless argues that citizens traditionally feel that 'l'État doit déplorer, dénoncer et énoncer le bien et le mal, le vrai et le faux, le commémorable et le non-commémorable'.⁶⁴⁷ The last phrase, which refers to the power of the state to arbitrate 'le commémorable et le non-commémorable', is particularly relevant to the Algerian War, both in terms of the previous lack of commemoration and today's 'hypermnésie'.

⁶⁴⁴ Interview with Adrien Hervais, aired 26 September 2005 (Radio HDR); Mohand Hamoumou, 'Pour les harkis, dépasser le stade de la compassion', *Le Monde*, 10 February 2005, p. 15.

⁶⁴⁵ http://elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/francais/interventions/discours_et_declarations/1995/juillet/allocution_de_m_jacques_chirac_president_de_la_republique_prononcee_lors_des_ceremonies_commemorant_la_grande_rafle_des_16_et_17_juillet_1942-paris.2503.html [28 June 2008].

⁶⁴⁶ Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.98.

⁶⁴⁷ Berlot, 'Préface', p.8.

If such a gesture has not been forthcoming towards the *harkis*, what exactly *has* the state done to recognise the community and their history since 1991? The answer appears to be taking a series of incremental steps that build on the foundations laid prior to the 1990s. Giscard's 1974 declaration that 'les Français musulmans ont les droits éminents à la reconnaissance nationale' was echoed by Jospin in 1981 in his capacity as leader of the PS.⁶⁴⁸ However, it took until 11 June 1994 for these words to be translated into a concrete proposal in the form of a law adopted unanimously by parliament expressing the gratitude of the Republic towards its *anciens supplétifs*.⁶⁴⁹ As the war grew in visibility during the 1990s so the pace of recognition for the *harkis* picked up with, among other initiatives, the unveiling of a monument in 1996 dedicated to the civilian and military victims who fell in North Africa between 1952 and 1962. By the time parliament classified the 'events' in Algeria as a 'war', 6.8 billion francs of aid had also been distributed via various government programmes to the *harki* community.⁶⁵⁰ However, the most significant act of official recognition took place on 25 September 2001 with the inaugural Journée nationale d'hommage aux harkis. Chirac took this opportunity not only to reiterate the gratitude of previous presidents towards the *harkis*, but crucially went on to state:

Les anciens des forces supplétives, les Harkis et leurs familles, ont été les victimes d'une terrible tragédie. Les massacres commis en 1962, frappant les militaires comme les civils, les femmes comme les enfants, laisseront pour toujours l'empreinte irréparable de la barbarie. Ils doivent être reconnus.

La France, en quittant le sol algérien, n'a pas su les empêcher. Elle n'a pas su sauver ses enfants.

Les Harkis ne sauraient demeurer les oubliés d'une histoire enfouie. Ils doivent désormais prendre toute leur place dans notre mémoire.⁶⁵¹

This was the closest the French government had ever come to admitting culpability over the massacres in 1962. That such a concession was made in the context of a specific day of commemoration devoted solely to the *harkis* greatly enhanced the symbolic weight attached to Chirac's words, as did his own *ancien combattant* status. Reactions to his declaration were however mixed. Within the academic community it was noted that not only had Chirac gone further than any of his predecessors in acknowledging

⁶⁴⁸ Raymond Courrière, *Vaincre l'oubli*, (Carcassonne, 1984), p.4.

⁶⁴⁹ Muller, *Le silence*, p.226; Cohen 'The Harkis', p.176.

⁶⁵⁰ Cohen 'The Harkis', p.176.

⁶⁵¹ http://elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/francais_archives/interventions/discours_et_declarations/2001/septembre/discours_du_president_de_la_republique_a_l_occasion_de_la_journee_d_hommage_national_aux_harkis.2027.html [28 June 2008]. It is also notable that the language and imagery of the speech parallels that used by the *filles de harkis* in their campaigns.

responsibility, but he also appeared to endorse a move away from the traditional presentation of the *harkis* as having fought loyally *for* France, implying a mix of motivations underlying engagement with the line ‘ils sont plus de 200 000 à avoir pris les armes pour la République et pour la France, pour défendre leurs terres et pour protéger leurs familles’.⁶⁵² Others, such as Géraldine Enjelvin, disagreed, viewing the text as an exercise in symbolic power through which the state appropriated the communal history of the *harkis*, previously located in individuals, and imposed in its place an official version of the past that ‘bore little resemblance’ to what those who experienced the war remembered.⁶⁵³ Enjelvin accepted that 25 September represented a more inclusive public narrative of the Algerian War by officially incorporating different combat experiences within its remit, calling it ‘an official mechanism of societal involvement – the enlargement of the “us”’. However, she went on to ask whether by re-writing the ‘master narrative’ to include the *harkis* the state was not in fact engineering a ‘delegitimation’ of the *harki* identity by once again seeking to speak *for* the community in a language that reflected its own priorities? This is the act of ‘symbolic violence’ alluded to in the title of her article.⁶⁵⁴ Far more consensual was the reaction in Algeria where the Journée nationale was denounced as an attempt to falsify history and a bid by the French state to jettison their responsibilities onto the FLN. The argument was also made, with reference to the recent actions of Azni, that seeking legal recourse against the French state for their betrayal of the *harkis* in 1962 was akin to the children of World War II collaborators trying to file suit against General de Gaulle. In the same vein, it was further pointed out that the citizens of Algeria had had no opportunity to bring cases for crimes against humanity against figures such as Bigeard or Massu.⁶⁵⁵

Within the *harki* community itself the general attitude was that while the Journée d’hommage marked an important step forward, plenty more remained to be done. Mohand Hamoumou perhaps summed it up best:

La communauté harkie a donc accueilli l’annonce de cette journée avec satisfaction...mais l’attend avec vigilance: il faut que la montagne n’accouche pas d’une souris. Car la reconnaissance due aux anciens harkis et autres ‘Français musulmans’ n’est pas une reconnaissance charitable pour les souffrances endurés mais, d’abord, la reconnaissance des torts des gouvernants de l’époque...⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Géraldine Enjelvin, ‘The Harki Identity: A Product of Marginalisation and Resistance to Symbolic Violence?’, *National Identities*, 8.2 (June 2006), 114-115.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid. 123-124.

⁶⁵⁵ *Harkis: le crime*, aired 12 February 2002.

⁶⁵⁶ Mohand Hamoumou, ‘Les harkis ont soif de vérité’, *La Croix*, 20 September 2001, p.27.

That is to say, admitting fault was a welcome start, but what the *harkis* were really holding out for was acceptance of responsibility. ‘Nous voulons que le gouvernement et l’Assemblée nationale aient enfin le courage de débattre du problème harki en commençant par reconnaître la responsabilité de la France’, Klech asserted. ‘On l’a fait pour les Arméniens, dont on a reconnu le génocide , pourquoi pas nous?’ he continued, touching at the heart of the issue: What is so different about the Algerian War that prevents France from repeating gestures it has already made with respect to other conflicts?⁶⁵⁷

An additional reason for the ongoing dissatisfaction of the *harki* community with the now numerous measures and gestures that have emanated from the political sphere has been highlighted by Branche who argues that the stance of the state towards all memory carriers connected to the war has been reactive as opposed to proactive. According to her, governments have only adopted positions or made concessions relative to the war because they have felt obliged to do so by the pressure placed upon them by the community in question. The examples she cites to support her contention with respect to the *harkis* include the law of 14 June 1994 which she regards as a response to the events of 1991, and the Journée nationale which she connects to Azni’s deposition to the courts.⁶⁵⁸ Branche is essentially arguing that piecemeal gestures made as and when the need arises are no substitute for a deliberate long-term strategy vis-à-vis the *harki* population, indeed vis-à-vis all groups connected to the war. This is particularly important given the current ‘memory wars’ climate which increases the risk of producing an ad hoc commemorative strategy that oscillates between whichever particular pressure group has the upper hand at any given moment. While this is an interesting contention, it possibly ascribes too much influence to these pressure groups which do, after all, represent minority populations. The French government’s reactive stance may be more of an indirect response to the moods of a general public today more sensitised to the war and its legacies than previous electorates, than to the power of specific memory carriers such as the *harki* community. It remains to be seen whether the exit of Chirac and the arrival of Sarkozy who has no direct connection to the war, will lead to the state taking the initiative on this issue and developing a more active and concrete commemorative policy.

⁶⁵⁷ Guillaume Bonnet, ‘La France rend mercredi un nouvel hommage national aux harkis’, *AFP Infos Françaises*, 23 September 2002.

⁶⁵⁸ For the full list see Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie*, pp.100-101.

‘Protestataires’ versus ‘Porte-paroles’

This chapter has charted the evolution of the activism of the *filis*, and now *filles, de harkis* since 1991. The principal axes of development during this period have been the failure of the newly formed associational movement to exploit its potential and become a powerful, collective advocate of the *harki* cause, which in turn facilitated the emergence of a series of prominent individuals who were cast by an increasingly interested media as spokespeople of the *harki* community. Yet paradoxically, despite owing their status largely to the weaknesses of associational mobilisation, all of the spokespeople in question, apart from Dalila Kerchouche, have opted to place their activism under the auspices of an association of their own creation. As already noted, Besnaci-Lancou is president of L’association Harkis et droits de l’Homme, while Mohand Hamoumou founded AJIR and Azni, despite being openly critical of what he perceives as the self-serving nature of the majority of *harki* associations, created AFRA in 1986 and today runs the CNLH.⁶⁵⁹ Even Arfi and Klech, perhaps the least likely candidates given the practical orientation of their campaigning, head respectively Coordination Harka and Justice pour les Harkis.⁶⁶⁰ All these associations post-date their founders’ move into activism and all are eclipsed by the status of the individuals at their helm. It seems that in spite of their flaws, associations are still regarded as the pre-eminent vehicle through which to pursue the *harki* cause.⁶⁶¹

The apparent paradox of a continued reliance on associations by figures who rose to prominence precisely because of the inadequacies of that mobilisation format is indicative of the *harki* community’s defiance of simple categorisation. Another binary opposition that this chapter has also revealed to be false is that originally proposed by Abrial whereby *harki* activists were neatly divided into ‘protestataires’ and ‘porte-paroles’. Abrial defines ‘protestataires’ as those children of *harkis* unable to make the distinction between different generations and experiences, they thus ‘vivent encore avec les souvenirs d’un passé qui ne leur appartient pas mais qu’ils se sont réappropriés’.⁶⁶² In contrast to ‘protestataires’ stand ‘porte-paroles’, men and women possessing a greater

⁶⁵⁹ Further information on the aims and activities of these associations can be found at the following URLs: www.harki.net/article.php; www.harkis.com/; www.blogg.org/blog-54218.html [2 August 2008].

⁶⁶⁰ Coordination Harka was formed by Arfi in 1991. With its headquarters in his hometown of Saint Laurent des Arbres and claiming only 216 adherents in the mid-1990s, the organisation has always been small and locally focused. Justice pour les Harkis was created in response to the police violence that accompanied the end of one of Klech’s longest hunger strikes (August 1997 to April 1998). As a federative collective boasting fifty members, it offers an exception to the previous rule of the failure of attempts at federation by *harki* activists. www.chez.com/justiceharkis [4 August 2008].

⁶⁶¹ Possible reasons for this include the desire to broaden their support base or to emulate the established and effective strategy of the *ped-noir* community.

⁶⁶² Abrial, *Les enfants*, p.213.

emotional distance from the cause they support and who consequently ‘ne se sentent pas personnellement atteints par le passé car ils établissent une frontière stricte entre ce qu’ils vivent, eux, et ce qu’à dû endurer la première génération’.⁶⁶³ As a static dichotomy the model has little value beyond the descriptive, however, as a prism through which to evaluate the changing nature of *harki* activism in the 1990s it may have more utility, suggesting not a clear-cut split, but rather a beginning and end point. The growth in experience and thus in sophistication of the *harki* cause and its spokespeople has produced historical narratives that draw a clearer separation between the experiences of their parents and their own traumas, while still maintaining a clear causality from one to the other. This development has probably been aided by the general movement away from demonstrative activism towards verbal and written advocacy, as evidenced by Arfi’s evolution from violent demonstrator to association administrator. In this light, Azni’s *plainte*, which mixes the testimonies and grievances of both generations, can be regarded as something of a step backwards.⁶⁶⁴

Although discussed separately here, the individuals in question do not operate in isolation. Their respective high profiles mean that they are aware of each other and indeed often share the same spotlight on television and in the pages of the press.⁶⁶⁵ What they also share, above and beyond differences of opinion or of approach, is a basic agreement on the key features of the *harki* history they are all seeking to promote. Less rigid and codified than the narratives of the *pied-noir* associations, there is nonetheless a central core of experiences and images around which their representations gravitate. Thus, perhaps unintentionally, they have succeeded where the broader associational movement has failed, creating a highly public, mutually reaffirming discourse with respect to the *harki* community. Pluralistic in terms of the motivations for becoming and experiences of being a *harki*, their narratives are nonetheless univocal in their denunciation of the binary traitor/patriot paradigm and in their evocation of a triptych of victimisation comprising: betrayal and abandonment in 1962, mistreatment and marginalisation in France, and finally institutional forgetting, which have yet to be satisfactorily acknowledged and rectified.

But does this necessarily mean that theirs is a representative discourse? In many respects this is difficult to ascertain, not least because of the ongoing paucity of first-generation testimony with which to compare the accounts proposed by these

⁶⁶³ Abrial, *Les enfants*, p.215.

⁶⁶⁴ Laurent Chabrun et al, ‘La plainte des harkis est-elle justifiée?’, *L’Express*, 30 August 2001, p.22.

⁶⁶⁵ Kerchouche appeared alongside Arfi on the programme ‘Harkis: la mémoire sacrifiée?’, *Ripostes*, aired 7 December 2003 (Fr5); while Besnaci-Lancou and Hamoumou shared the floor during the *harki*-dedicated emission of *Merci pour l’info*, aired 7 November 2003 (Canal+).

spokespeople.⁶⁶⁶ It is also the case that their status was assigned to them by the French media and public who appointed them symbols for a wider population who had struggled for many years without a voice. Consequently, regardless of the humbleness of their origins, today all are elites. Their trajectory has been compared to that of the descendants of Algerian immigrants in that greater material advantages, not least educationally, have enabled them to undertake the task of rehabilitating the image of their parents.⁶⁶⁷ Yet within the group there are differing degrees of socio-economic and cultural capital which further complicates the issue of how representative each is. On the one hand, all their backgrounds lie in the camps - albeit only for one year in Kerchouche's case - creating a common denominator between them and the rest of the *harki* population. On the other hand, Kerchouche, Besnaci-Lancou, and Hamoumou have all enjoyed subsequent educational and career successes, independent of their activism, which potentially implies a distance between them and the most vulnerable segments of their community, precisely the elements they agitate on behalf of, that doesn't exist for Arfi, Klech and Azni.⁶⁶⁸ However, this apparent gap and the potential within it for a disconnect between representatives and represented, as happened with Larradji in 1975, seems ultimately to be over-ridden by the *fils* or *fille de harki* identity actively proclaimed by all and by their ongoing commitment to their community and its past.

⁶⁶⁶ Although the fact that Kerchouche, Besnaci-Lancou and Azni have all succeeded in gathering first-hand accounts suggests some level of acceptance and approval from the wider community.

⁶⁶⁷ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Claude Liauzu, 'Les harkis, prisonniers de mémoire', *Libération*, 2 August 2005, p.25.

⁶⁶⁸ A perception that is unconsciously reinforced by media coverage which almost never features the former trio at the sites of the former camps, while the latter three are often filmed and interviewed there, interacting with the minority of *harkis* who remain or who live nearby.

7. *Pieds-noirs* and *Harkis*: The Evolution of a Relationship 1991-2007

The emergence of the descendants of the *harkis* as a memory carrier in their own right did not mean that other groups who had previously sought to speak on behalf of the community simply fell silent. As the previous chapter discussed, interactions between the French government, the media, and the *harki* community continued, although they did undergo significant evolutions in the years following 1991. In contrast, the Algerian government maintained its rigid stance that the *harkis* were traitors who were not welcome to visit their country of birth. But what of the relationship between the *harkis* and sub-national collectives, in particular the *pieds-noirs* who had been so vocal in the pre-1991 era? In line with their oft-professed deep commitment to their 'frères musulmans', *pied-noir* associations carried on campaigning for recognition to be accorded to the *harki* community throughout this period. Arguably, they also became the dominant source of external sub-state representations of the *harkis* as elite activism essentially died with the Bachaga in 1982, while veterans such as Generals Faivre and Meyer increasingly came to express their opinions on the *harkis* through the medium of *pied-noir* associations.⁶⁶⁹ This further deepening of the already longstanding connections between *pied-noir* associations and ex-militaires benefited the former because of the authenticity that could be attributed to accounts coming from men with first-hand experience of fighting alongside the *harkis* and, in the case of Faivre, the legitimacy that could be derived from his academic qualifications.⁶⁷⁰ With respect to men like Meyer, or Colonel Moinet, collaboration with *pied-noir* organisations gave them an established platform from which to disseminate their message and the guarantee of a positive reception from a like-minded audience of a good size. In light of the altered context of the post-1991 period this chapter will assess to what extent and how representations of the *harkis* presented by and through *pied-noir* associations evolved in response to this new environment.

Jeune Pied-Noir and the *harkis*

A particularly interesting association in this respect is Jeune Pied-Noir (JPN), formed in 1981 by husband and wife team Bernard Coll and Taouès Titraoui. Although JPN's goals were similar to those of other *pied-noir* associations created around that time, being more concerned with the moral than with the material problems facing the *pied-noir* community, where they differed was in the consistently pre-eminent place they accorded to the

⁶⁶⁹ After the Bachaga's death, people looked to his son, Ali Boualam, to take up the *harki* cause. As vice-president of ANFANOMA, Ali offered the potential for potent alliance to be established between the two communities. However, this potential was never fully realised as Ali died in 1991.

⁶⁷⁰ Faivre holds a doctorate having submitted a thesis to the Sorbonne in 1986 on the evolution of the armed forces.

‘réhabilitation de la communauté harkie’, largely because of the *fille de harki* status of Titraoui.⁶⁷¹ Although Coll is very much the public face of JPN, Titraoui nonetheless makes an invaluable contribution simply through her *fille de harki* identity which is used to legitimate JPN’s claim to speak for the *harki* community, perhaps explaining why so many *pied-noir* associations regularly turn to the organisation for commentary on this subject. Furthermore, the union between Tirtaoui and Coll, a *pied-noir*, also gives implicit credence to the *pied-noir* assertion that French Algeria was characterised by close and harmonious relations between the indigenous and settler communities.

On a practical level ‘rehabilitating’ the *harkis* is regarded as a three-stage process involving housing for the first generation, jobs for the second generation, and education for subsequent generations.⁶⁷² At the commemorative level, JPN is committed to the search for ‘la vérité historique’ and to enshrining that truth in the public’s consciousness through endeavours such as a memorial to ‘l’Harki inconnu’ and the dedication of street names to the community.⁶⁷³ In 1991, JPN produced *Le livre des harkis* which combined history and testimony with graphic photos in order to shed light on ‘cette partie douloureuse de notre histoire’.⁶⁷⁴ Although acknowledging prior publications by figures such as the Bachaga, Faivre, and Camille Brière, JPN nonetheless marketed their contribution as the first to ‘donner la parole aux harkis et à ceux qui les ont aidés’.⁶⁷⁵ Yet despite the size of its ambitions, *Le livre des harkis* enjoyed only a limited print run and is today difficult to find.⁶⁷⁶ However, this was to a large degree offset by the prolific nature of JPN’s contributions to a range of *pied-noir* journals, most notably *PNM* for whom they seem to be the *de facto* *harki* reporters, which helped to ensure that the association enjoyed widespread publicity, certainly within the *pied-noir* milieu. Coll was also a regular guest on *pied-noir* dedicated shows during the early 1990s where he repeatedly sought to remind French audiences of the ongoing plight of the *harkis*. Additionally, the association has run numerous campaigns on behalf of the *harkis* which have, again, benefited from the space accorded to their promotion in various *pied-noir* journals. The most successful of these was ‘Hommage aux harkis’ which began in 1985 with the intention of ‘briser le silence des médias’ and culminated in 1989 with the issue of a commemorative stamp paying homage to France’s auxiliary soldiers, a measure the JPN campaign had been key in securing (see Appendix I). In the intervening years, a series of

⁶⁷¹ Titraoui’s family had a rather unusual trajectory which encompassed working for Prince Philippe de Mérode as well as time in the Jouques Camp in the south of France. For further details of her life story see Dominique Fargues, *Mémoires de pieds-noirs*, (Paris, 2008), pp.165, 208, 248.

⁶⁷² Taouès Titraoui and Bernard Coll, *Le livre des harkis*, (Bièvres, 1991), p.255.

⁶⁷³ Ibid. p.255.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid. p.10.

⁶⁷⁵ Bernard Coll, ‘Le livre de harkis: Les harkis témoignent’, *PNM*, 22 (January 1992), 22.

⁶⁷⁶ The association financed the publication of their own book, producing 500 copies for people who had reserved in advance and a further 2000 copies for general distribution. My thanks to Regis and Constanze at Cedpederf Books for this information.

twenty-five ceremonies were held across France which awarded bronze ‘Hommage aux harkis’ medals, to *harkis* and a ‘diplôme de la solidarité française’ to those, mainly *pieds-noirs*, who had aided the community. These occasions were often sponsored by associations like ANFANOMA and the Cercle Algérieniste and occasionally attended by sympathetic local mayors.⁶⁷⁷

Continuity of content

While they may be unusual in the amount of attention they devote to the *harkis*, what JPN actually has to say about the community has a lot in common with the discourses of other *pied-noir* associations. Examining the changes in this content and its functions since 1991 therefore allows the evolution of the relationship between the *pied-noir* and *harki* communities to be traced. One of the most obvious developments in the post-1991 period is the expansion of the reasons for donning a French uniform attributed to the *harkis* by *pied-noir* associations. Thus beyond simple patriotism, *L’Algérieniste* explained that *harkis* enrolled because ‘ils avaient le sentiment de défendre leur famille, de l’avoir soustraite au racket de l’impôt révolutionnaire et à la terreur que le FLN faisait régner’.⁶⁷⁸ However, this apparent progression is more circumscribed than it first appears because although a greater number of motivations for engagement are acknowledged, all are presented as the outcome of acts of free will with any notion of compulsion, or of the ‘choice’ being a desperate last resort absent.⁶⁷⁹ The lines of loyalty thus remain clear and there is never any hint of the ambiguous position of someone like Kerchouche’s father. Therefore the widening of the field of motivations in no way disturbed the legitimacy of the argument that the *harkis* were unanimously ‘persuadés d’avoir fait le bon choix’ and were engaged ‘fermement pour la France’.⁶⁸⁰ This stance was supported by the unwavering *pied-noir* insistence that the *harkis* were French, a right indisputably earned and repeatedly proven through *le sang versé* for the motherland. ‘La présence fidèle et souvent héroïque de Musulmans algériens dans les armées et sous le drapeau de la France ne date pas d’hier’ JPN reminded its readers, urging them not

⁶⁷⁷ Titraoui and Coll, *Le livre*, pp.252-254.

⁶⁷⁸ Roger Fiorio, ‘Hommage aux Harkis, mes compagnons, mes frères’, *L’Algérieniste*, 97 (March 2002), 4.

⁶⁷⁹ This would explain why *pied-noir* associations heavily promoted Brahim Sadouni’s autobiography as the first ‘complete’ testimony from a *harki* when in fact Saïd Ferdi’s *Un enfant dans la guerre* predated it by several years. The difference between the two accounts being Sadouni’s assertion to JPN that ‘Nous avons loyalement servi la France, et nous ne le regretterons jamais’ versus Ferdi’s forced conscription. However, in the book itself Sadouni presents his engagement as something of an accident, claiming he became a mechanic for the French army because he could not find any other jobs and had no idea that fixing their vehicles would mean being classed as a *harki*. Titraoui and Coll, *Le livre*, p.251; Brahim Sadouni, *Français sans patrie: La Reconnaissance*, (Rouen, 1985), p.82.

⁶⁸⁰ Fiorio, ‘Hommage aux Harkis’, 4.

to forget the contribution made by colonial troops in the two World Wars.⁶⁸¹ It was this history of loyal service which led the Cercle Algérieniste to conclude that what the *harkis* represented was ‘une belle, émouvante, merveilleuse histoire’ of brave patriots who ‘portaient fièrement le drapeau français à bout de bras ...Et dans leur coeur’.⁶⁸²

Outside of the battlefield, another reason the *harkis* felt themselves to be so intimately French, according to *pied-noir* associations, was the status of French Algeria as a harmonious multi-ethnic family. Even in 2008, Coll could be found boasting ‘On parle beaucoup de “multiculturalisme” aujourd’hui, mais là-bas c’était très brassé, quelque chose très original était née’.⁶⁸³ Every *pied-noir* it seems can cite an example to illustrate the close communal ties of their homeland and few, furthermore, seem capable of accepting that one example does not equate to conclusive proof for an entire country. For example, Jacques Roseau claimed that in his home village of Novi ‘nous avons une vie très très réellement familiale avec les gens là...tous les villages étaient comme ça’.⁶⁸⁴ The only admissible deviation from this image appears to be the acknowledgement that relationships were often closer in rural areas where agricultors tended to live in greater proximity to their workers and generally spoke Arabic. On the rare occasions when distance between the various communities is recognised, it is usually justified as having been benign, natural, and mutual; that is communities choosing to live side-by-side rather than together, but without friction in all cases. Coll, for example, stressed that all the schools were mixed and therefore the opportunities for integration existed, it was just that neither side chose to pursue them.⁶⁸⁵ This reflects the ongoing unwillingness among *pieds-noirs* to admit to any negativity when it comes to French Algeria, as if one single instance of acrimony could erase *all* the positive examples. On the *harki* side, accounts of co-existence are far more nuanced and complex, such as Besnaci-Lancou’s evocation of the reaction in her grandmother’s village when the settlers departed at the end of the war: ‘même si la cohabitation n’avait pas été toujours idéale, certains villageois s’étaient cachés pour pleurer en voyant partir le convoi de ceux qui avaient été leurs compagnons depuis plus d’un siècle’.⁶⁸⁶

With respect to the war and its aftermath, *pied-noir* associations have remained consistent in their depiction of the *harkis* as having been betrayed when France disarmed and then abandoned them to the vengeful FLN. Those lucky enough to escape the ‘genocide’, the

⁶⁸¹ Titraoui and Coll, *Le livre*, p.8.

⁶⁸² Pierre Gazel, ‘Le drapeau’, *L’Algérieniste*, 59 (September 1992), 2.

⁶⁸³ Bernard Coll cited in Fargues, *Mémoires des pieds-noirs*, p.55. Coll’s comment represents an increasing trend among *pied-noir* associations of trying to give their colonial experience a contemporary relevance by tying it into issues like multiculturalism that have been prominent on France’s political and social agenda in recent years.

⁶⁸⁴ ‘Algérie: mémoires d’une guerre’, *Caractères*, 22 November 1991 (Channel 3).

⁶⁸⁵ Coll cited in Fargues, *Les mémoires de pieds-noirs*, pp.55, 57.

⁶⁸⁶ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki: Le bouleversant témoignage d’une enfant de la guerre d’Algérie*, with Marie-Christine Ray, (Paris, 2005), pp.22-36.

magnitude of which has continued to be estimated at between 100,000 and 150,000 victims, despite academic evidence congregating around the lower figure of 65,000, were then 'rewarded' for their service by being parked in camps and forgotten about.⁶⁸⁷ Indeed, the *pieds-noirs* maintain that the entire history of the *harkis* community, both the positive pre-war and tragic post-war aspects, has been at least ignored, if not actively occulted, by everyone except them.

Continuity of function

In light of the continuity in representations of the *harkis* presented by *pied-noir* associations, it is unsurprising that the functions these narratives serve have remained equally static. It remains the case that recitations of the history of the *harkis* serve primarily to prove claims made by *pied-noir* activists about their own community and history. For example, solidarity with 'nos frères' is still used to refute the accusation that colonial Algeria was an unequal and unjust society. As William Cohen bluntly put it:

By championing the case of the *harkis* as 'good Arabs' - those loyal to France - the *pieds-noirs* are proving to themselves and the nation that they are capable of Arabophilia...Solidarity now suggests the solidarity of population groups in the days of *Algérie française*.⁶⁸⁸

This solidarity is also used to support the *pied-noir* contention that the FLN were an unrepresentative minority. 'Comment peut on alors vouloir faire croire qu'il y avait un fossé entre les deux communautés' asked Yvan Santini in *PNM*, 'alors que le FLN avait tué beaucoup plus de musulmans que d'européens!'⁶⁸⁹ JPN offered more precise statistical evidence when they made the same point:

Au total le nombre de ces auxiliaires de l'armée français atteignait 200,000 en 1962, alors qu'à la même époque, selon Ahmed BEN BELLA, les wilayas FLN exsangues étaient réduites à 10,000 combattants. Autrement dit, les musulmans engagés pour la France représentaient vingt fois autant que les rebelles.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁷ See, for example, Bernard Coll, 'Qui sont les harkis', *PNM*, 3 (April 1990), 24.

⁶⁸⁸ William B. Cohen, 'Pied-Noir Memory, History and the Algerian War', in *Europe's Invisible Migrants*, ed. by Andrea L. Smith, (Amsterdam, 2003), p.133.

⁶⁸⁹ Yvan Santini, 'Tribune libre', *PNM*, 22 (January 1992), 7.

⁶⁹⁰ Titraoui and Coll, *Le livre*, p.8.

What has changed, however, in the post-1991 period, especially since 2000, is the invocation of the *harkis* as an indirect refutation of accusations of wrongdoing by the French army during the war. Prior to this, allegations of misconduct were generally simply dismissed by *pied-noir* associations. However, following the storm created by Louisette Ighilahriz's claims in *Le Monde* in 2001 that she had been tortured while being interrogated by French paratroopers, outright denial ceased to be a plausible recourse.⁶⁹¹ Instead, *pied-noir* associations sought to shift the focus away from the French army and onto atrocities committed by the FLN, which, they argued, were of a far greater magnitude. Crucial to this argument were the *harkis*; 150,000 deaths being a powerful statistic to wield, as are the graphic images supplied by Véritas of 'hommes, femmes et enfants, coupés en morceaux, écorchés vifs, dépecés, ébouillantés, au delà des limites de la barbarie'.⁶⁹² The purpose of such examples is to magnify the suffering of the *pieds-noirs*, merging it with that experienced by the *harkis*. This is achieved by stressing the shared nature of the experiences of the two groups, including terror at the hands of the FLN, exile, an ignominious welcome in France, as well as years of marginalisation and silence. In this context, Thierry Rolando of the Cercle algérieniste spoke of 'les mémoires parallèles et entremêlées de nos deux communautés', while Yves Sainsot of ANFANOMA wrote during Klech's 1997 hunger strike:

Cette communauté est aussi la nôtre. Qui mieux que nous est à même de comprendre la souffrance, la désespérance de nos frères de lutte? Ils ont connu toutes les difficultés que nous mêmes traversons, même au delà l'incompréhension, le racisme des Français de métropole...⁶⁹³

This suffering is often conflated statistically with *L'écho de l'Oranie* adding the estimated 25,000 settlers who 'disappeared' to 150,000 *harki* to give a figure of 175,000 'victims' that France 'n'a su ensevelir dans le grand drap noir de l'oubli'.⁶⁹⁴ Amalgamations such as this erase the different magnitudes of loss, as well as the different contexts for the deaths, replacing them with a single, more dramatic image of collective suffering that the *pieds-noirs* can inscribe themselves within. This can be most clearly seen during the Journée nationale when virtually every *pied-noir* journal stressed the longstanding and intimate connections between themselves and the *harkis*:

⁶⁹¹ Ighilahriz's revelations first appeared in Florence Beaugé, 'Torturée par l'armée française en Algérie, "Lila" recherché l'homme qui l'a sauvée', *Le Monde*, 20 June 2000.

⁶⁹² Albertelli, Louis, Amar Boumaraf and Anne Cazal, 'Bouteflikabulations', *LV*, 45 (September 2000), 7.

⁶⁹³ Rolando, Thierry, 'Mémoire d'avenir', *L'algérieniste*, 99 (September 2002), p. 3; Yves Sainsot, 'Grève de faim des enfants des harkis', *FH*, 384-385 (July-August 1997), 12.

⁶⁹⁴ Georges Emile Paul, 'Vers une journée nationale d'hommage aux Harkis', *EO* 275 (July-August 2001), 9.

Nous, Français d'Algérie d'origine européenne, nous qui avons été leurs [les harkis] frères de coeur avant d'être leurs frères d'armes, nous avons le sentiment profond, dont nous souffrons, avec eux et comme eux, d'une injustice flagrante à leur encontre.⁶⁹⁵

The *harkis* thus offered *pied-noir* associations an ideal issue on which to focus; one that was close to their hearts, that was enjoying an unprecedented amount of media attention, and that they could exploit to advance their own historical arguments. Consequently, a reference to the *harki* community became a virtual *passage oblige* for all *pied-noir* associations.

Unfortunately, the *harkis* became the ideal new crusade for the *pieds-noirs* at precisely the moment that the history and contemporary situation of the *ancien supplétifs* began to gain some of the recognition they had sought for so long. Greater public awareness, serious academic attention, and a series of governmental measures, all indicated that progress was being made, albeit more slowly than many would have liked. But the more progress was made, the less injustice remained for *pied-noir* associations to tie their own suffering into and to mobilise against. Thus paradoxically the very factors that made the *harkis* appealing to *pied-noir* associations were the same features that would also ultimately erode their utility. Rather like the shark that needs to keep swimming in order to survive, the *pied-noir* community, particularly at the level of associations, needs outstanding grievances to campaign on behalf of in order to maintain its vitality. As a collective they also find it difficult to change direction; once they have decided on a stance they stick to it, irrespective of where the weight of evidence actually lies. They consequently refused to acknowledge that the *harkis* were no longer 'les oubliés de l'histoire' because to do so would involve giving up their position that they, like the *harkis*, constitute a neglected, misunderstood, and unjustly maligned community of victims. Hence on the eve of the first Journée nationale, the Cercle Algérieniste could be found arguing:

Il est grand temps, en effet, que le silence concernant l'abandon et le massacre de ceux qui ont servi avec fidélité la France, soit rompu et que notre pays reconnaisse enfin cette tache noir dans son histoire.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁵ Georges Emile Paul, 'Vous avez bien dit: Journée Nationale d'Hommage aux harkis?', *LV*, 54 (June 2001), 9.

⁶⁹⁶ Rolando, Thierry, 'Le temps de la justice et la vérité est-il enfin venu?', *L'Algérieniste*, 95 Supplement, (September 2001), 1.

This statement is virtually identical in tone and vocabulary to Jo Sohet's 1979 article for the *Cercle Algérieniste* which spoke of the need to '[r]ompre le silence' surrounding the *harkis*, epitomising the *pied-noir* tendency to continue to place the *harkis* in an economic and cultural context more akin to the 1960s than the new millenium.⁶⁹⁷ While the *filles* and *filles de harkis* characterised the Journée nationale as merely a step principally to indicate forward movement in an ongoing journey, *pied-noir* associations used the same phrase, 'seulement une étape', in order to place the emphasis on the stationary and the idea that 'L'heure de la repentance n'a pas encore sonné', thus enabling them to perpetuate their discourse of unresolved injustice.⁶⁹⁸

Questions of agency and authority

The *harki* community may now be a must-mention for *pied-noir* associations as they seek to cash in on their increasingly prominent public profile, but what is interesting is how little agency is ascribed to the *harki* community itself for this development. Instead, any attention devoted to the *harkis* is generally attributed to the tireless campaigning on their behalf by the *piets-noirs* and, as discussed above, still placed within a paradigm of continuing general ignorance. Clarisse Buono found that even the Journée nationale was framed by her *pied-noir* interviewees as the result of *their* indefatigable campaigning which was now being rewarded by this national day of recognition. The activism of the children of the *harkis* was never mentioned, 'comme si la communauté pied-noir était seul responsable de l'attention attirée sur la situation des supplétifs'.⁶⁹⁹ Within journals, the norm is still for articles pertaining to the *harkis* to be written by those who knew and/or commanded them during the war, as indicated by the regularity with which Maurice Faivre's byline appears. Furthermore, the reaction from the *pied-noir* community to slights against the *harkis* such as Bouteflika's 'collabo' remark, or General Meyer's lawsuit against Marcel Péju for defamation after he made a similar equation in 2001, are all framed by the logic that the *piets-noirs* need to step up and defend the *harkis* because no one else will, including the *harkis* themselves. As Meyer wrote: 'Il m'est arrivé de nombreuses reprises, et il m'arrive toujours de réagir avec vigueur pour défendre leur mémoire injustement salie...' ⁷⁰⁰ More recently, when PS deputy Georges Frêche referred to the *harkis* as 'sous hommes', the *pied-noir* community again mobilised

⁶⁹⁷ Jo Sohet, 'Les Harkis, ces oubliés de l'histoire 1962-1978', *L'Algérieniste*, 5 (15 March 1979), 27.

⁶⁹⁸ '25 septembre 2001: Une étape importante pour les Harkis, seulement une étape', *FH*, 424-425 (September-October 2001), 12.

⁶⁹⁹ Clarisse Buono, *Pieds-noirs de père en fils*, (Paris, 2004), p.131.

⁷⁰⁰ For further details on Meyer's suit, which he eventually won, see François Meyer, *Pour l'honneur... avec les harkis de 1958 à nos jours*, (Tours, 2005), pp.9, 11-14, 20, 54.

despite the fact that a well organised, publicised, and supported series of protests had been undertaken independently by *harki* activists, including a hunger strike by Klech.⁷⁰¹

It is furthermore the case that although a greater place may be afforded to the *harkis* by associations, their history and current situation continue to be very much a sub-section of the wider *pied-noir* narrative as proven by the relatively small amount of time and space devoted to them. In Gilles Perez's three-part documentary, *Les pieds-noirs: Histoire d'une blessure*, for example, the *harkis* feature only very briefly at the end of part two, *Les années dramatiques*, which evokes the war, after lengthy treatments of Isly, Oran, and the kidnapping of Europeans following the Evian Accords. Although Dominique Fargues' book, *Mémoires des pieds-noirs*, features the *harkis* more consistently, it is notable that there are only three contributors from the *harki* community itself, one of whom is Titraoui, and by far the largest segment in which they appear is that entitled 'Les relations entre Européens et musulmans' where the majority of testimony comes from *pieds-noirs* such as Coll.⁷⁰²

Not only do *pied-noir* associations still treat the *harki* community as needing them to speak and act for them, but they further implicitly replicate colonial relationships by seeking to control what *harkis* say about them. Although it is relatively unusual for *harki* activists to mention the *pied-noir* community, some of the 'media stars' have ventured opinions and when what they say does not fit with the *pied-noir* worldview, associations are quick to react. Dalila Kerchouche and Fatima Besnaci-Lancou have both fallen foul of the *pied-noir* milieu for precisely this reason, their relatively high public profiles undoubtedly contributing to the strength of the indignation their comments aroused. The Cercle Algérieniste, for example, were dissatisfied with Kerchouche's characterisation of the *chef de camp* in *Harkis* as a cruel and sadistic bully. This portrait was denounced by Faivre as wholly inaccurate on the basis that 'aucun chantier forestier n'a été dirigé par un officier; le chef de chantier était généralement un sous-officier retraité...'⁷⁰³ By focusing on this minor point of fact, Faivre thus entirely avoided dealing with the substance of Kerchouche's claim regarding the treatment meted out to the *harkis* by those placed in charge of them, irrespective of their military rank. He went on to explain that her mistakes clearly stemmed from the fact that she had no direct experience of camp life and was thus basing her interpretation on the testimony of others received forty years later, appealing to the familiar *pied-noir* belief that only those who have lived through events have the right to speak of them. Instead, Faivre suggested she should have relied on the evidence contained within official archives, as he does, rather than

⁷⁰¹ For coverage of these protests in the national media see Julien Martin, 'Des militants de la cause des harkis occupent le siège du PS', *Libération*, 18 February 2006, p.14; Benoît Hopquin, 'A Paris, les harkis manifestent pour retrouver une dignité bafouée', *Le Monde*, 28 March 2006, p.14.

⁷⁰² 'Les années dramatiques', *Les pieds-noirs: Histoires d'une blessure*, aired 31 March 2007 (Fr3); Fargues, *Mémoires des pieds-noirs*, pp.53-72, 161-170, 203-210, 243-252.

⁷⁰³ Faivre, 'Désinformation', 5.

on ‘des jugements négatifs de ceux qui ont raté leur intégration’.⁷⁰⁴ Véritas also dismissed Kerchouche’s portrayal arguing that because it was courtesy of the actions of *some* French officers that certain *harkis* were able to escape from Algeria, *no* officer could then have treated them badly once they were in France.⁷⁰⁵ Both associations agreed however, that at the root of Kerchouche’s unjust portrayal was ideological bias. ‘[E]lle ne cite que des témoignages qui vont dans le sens de sa thèse’ complained Faivre, a flaw that Véritas attributed to her indoctrination by the French education system: ‘L’auteur poursuit la récitation fidèle au catéchisme universel anti-pieds-noirs qu’on lui enseigne!’⁷⁰⁶ This was also deemed to be the source of the ‘interprétations discutables’ advanced by Besnaci-Lancou, which, along with the interpretations of Ageron, Thénault, Branche, and Vidal Naquet, compared unfavourably against the scholarship of Jordi, Hamoumou, and Faivre.⁷⁰⁷

The contemporary reality is that the *pieds-noirs* are no longer in a position to dominate representations of the *harkis*. Although they may have taken the lead in the 1960s and 1970s, subsequent developments have conspired to deprive *pied-noir* associations of the initiative. In contrast, descendants of the *harkis* have thrown off the shackles of external narratives to take control of their own historical discourse and today are driving the commemorative agenda for their community. In the process, the balance of power has shifted between the two communities creating a situation whereby the *pieds-noirs* need the *harkis* more than the *harkis* need them, even if the *pieds-noirs* have yet to acknowledge this fact. This is certainly one way to read the support amongst *pied-noir* associations for Boussad Azni’s *plainte*.⁷⁰⁸ The hope seems to be that Azni will succeed where their previous attempts, such as against General Katz, have failed, thus setting a legal precedent that the *pied-noir* community can then benefit from.

But if *harki* activists have now stepped out of the shadows of the *pieds-noirs*, does this then mean that they have cut all ties with the community? The short answer is no, at least not at an associational level. While individual activists such as Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou keep their distance, and although there has been a noticeable reconfiguration of the relationship between the two groups, there is still a relationship to speak of. The status of this new partnership is perhaps best illustrated by Mohand Hamoumou who, primarily through his

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. 5. Contrary to a certain section of opinion, the difference between Faivre and a historian like Raphaëlle Branche is not amateurism versus professionalism but rather their attitude to archives as repositories of historical evidence. Faivre places absolute faith in what the archives contain which explains why much of his work takes the form of stating a ‘truth’ and providing details of the archive that ‘proves’ it. In contrast, Branche, like most historians, displays a healthy scepticism towards such official material and is well aware of what is not contained in such archives.

⁷⁰⁵ Pierre Cattin, ‘Un crime sans assassins’, *LV*, 90 (February 2005), 4.

⁷⁰⁶ Faivre, ‘Désinformation’, 5; Cattin, ‘Un crime’, 4.

⁷⁰⁷ Maurice Faivre, ‘Les Harkis: une identité fondée sur l’Histoire’, *L’Algérieniste*, 114 (June 2006), 113.

⁷⁰⁸ ‘Pre-congrès du Comité nationale de liaison des Harkis à Bias’, *L’Algérieniste*, 96 (December 2001), 5.

leadership of AJIR, has made common cause with the *pieds-noirs* when such links serve the interests of his own association and community. AJIR is thus an established contributor to *PNM*, which provides a forum in which to advertise their endeavours and disseminate their opinions. The association has also penned articles for *Véritas*, one of which called explicitly for the *pieds-noirs* to provide practical proof of their rhetorical commitment to the *harkis* by supporting the re-launch of the campaign ‘Justice pour les Harkis’ which sought to obtain 150,000 signatures on a petition demand hommage be paid to the 150,000 victims of the post-war massacres. ‘On parle souvent de solidarité envers les Harkis’, Hamoumou boldly stated, ‘Voici une occasion concrète de le prouver. Chicche?’⁷⁰⁹ In return, AJIR’s website promotes past and present *pied-noir* lawsuits and includes a section in which the association renders ‘Hommage aux justes’, such as François Meyer. Hamoumou has also appeared at *pied-noir* events, sharing platforms with the likes of *Véritas*’ Anne Cazal. Finally, when seeking to mobilise opposition to the proposed ‘traité d’amitié’ between France and Algeria, AJIR went so far as to argue that the *harkis* and *pieds-noirs* formed a single ‘communauté de destin tragique’ who paid the price in 1962 for their ‘double attachement à la France et à la terre d’Algérie’.⁷¹⁰ Recognising that to ignore the *pied-noir* community would be akin to cutting off his nose to spite his face, Hamoumou has instead opted for a calculated alliance which allows him to benefit from the resources of the cohesive and well-established *pied-noir* associational network without compromising the agenda of his own cause and community. The situation today is therefore almost the exact opposite of what it was in the 1960s and 1970s, testament to the progress made by *harki* activism and the community behind it.

⁷⁰⁹ Mohand Hamoumou, ‘AJIR Pour les Harkis’, *LV*, 54 (June 2001), 11.

⁷¹⁰ AJIR, ‘Point de vue: Un traité d’amitié Franco-Algérien’, *PNM*, 135 (November 2005), 12.

8. Transmission: First Generation Memories

The complexity of the Franco-Algerian past and the unique ways this has unfolded within the *harki* community, both during and after the war, means that the transmission of history and memory has followed neither a chronological nor a linear trajectory. The absence of the past within *harki* families pushed an increasingly militant second generation to look outside of their community for information concerning their history, a quest which brought them into contact with a range of pre-existing external groups that sought to speak on behalf of their parents. Over the following decades the complicated relationship between these various actors played itself out, culminating in the reclamation by the *filles* and *filles de harkis* of their own voice and the extrication of their history from the tangled web of other people's narratives. Now firmly in control of the historical and commemorative agenda for their own community, what is interesting about this second generation activism is the impact it has had upon the first generation, namely the way in which it has fostered a greater willingness among *harkis* and their spouses to speak publicly of their own experiences. This is certainly the case for Zoulikha who explains: 'Aujourd'hui, je suis très fière que nos enfants se battent pour l'honneur de leurs pères. Je suis aussi très contente de témoigner pour laisser une trace à nos arrière-arrière-petits-enfants afin qu'ils aient un peu d'information sur notre grande aventure'.⁷¹¹

The activism of their descendants has not only raised the profile of the *harki* community by sensitising the French public to the complexity of their history but, by breaking with ideologically driven interpretations, has also created more space for experiences that fall outside of these narrow explanatory frameworks. This development has been further nurtured by the co-incidence of the new found desire to 'laisser une trace' with an increasingly concerted effort by activists and academics to seek out and disseminate these memories resulting in a growing body of testimony. Although there are criticisms that can be levelled against this process, without such undertakings our knowledge of the *harki* experience would be immeasurably poorer. In addition to possessing resources not easily available to *harkis*, mediation through a third party can also provide crucial legitimacy and a sense of worth, especially when dealing with traumatic or occulted events. It is furthermore the case that the reawakened interest in the War of Independence, which shows no sign of abating, has helped ensure an audience for these accounts. With the passing of time and changing social and political contexts it has become easier for the *harkis* to articulate their experiences, not least because after more than forty years living in France, most *harkis* now speak the language and often live amongst the mainstream population. Finally, the first

⁷¹¹ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères: paroles blessées: Une autre histoire de harkis*, (Léchéelle, 2006), p.112.

generation are entering the later stages of their lives when reflection is commonplace. Articulating the combined result of these elements, Djida, the wife of a *harki*, stated 'Je n'ai jamais raconté ce qui nous est arrivé...mais maintenant, c'est différent'.⁷¹²

The gestation of testimonies like Djida's has thus been shaped by such a wide array of factors and has taken place over such a long time span that the existence of a 'pure', unmediated first generation memory is highly doubtful. This does not mean that questions such as who is speaking for whom, to whom, and why become moot, but rather that discourses should not be automatically discounted simply because they do not come to us directly from the mouths of the actors themselves. Analysing the processes through which these narratives and their carriers have gone is what enables the resultant composite picture of the past to be properly contextualised and thus understood. It is this *bricolage* past that will now be outlined in order to put the flesh of human experience onto the factual bones of the *harki* trajectory outlined in the introduction and to highlight the current state of historical understanding of this community. The structure will reflect the key stages of the *harki* experience, moving from engagement, through exile, to life in France, but will also consider the importance of less tangible issues such as choice, betrayal, regret, and nostalgia before concluding with an analysis of the gaps that still remain in our knowledge of this rich and diverse population.

'Ils s'étaient engagés avec la France et non pour la France'

The lowest common denominator with respect to the *harkis* is that they all served under the French flag during the War of Independence. This is however, where the similarities end. In contrast to external actors who sought to group the *harkis* under a cohesive master narrative, the testimonies of those who actually fought reveal a much messier reality. What is most obvious is the rejection of the idea that theirs was a 'choice', in the sense of a voluntary decision made with a full awareness of the implications of their actions. Jordi's description of Khélifa Haroud as 'un homme qui a été plus victime des circonstances qu'acteur de sa propre vie' appears to be emblematic of the group as a whole, calling into question the ideological connotations often attached to the service of the *harkis*, a point underscored by Besnaci-Lancou's remark that the *harkis* 's'étaient engagés avec la France et non pour la France'.⁷¹³

Further undermining ideological justifications is the fact that siding with the French was not at the time perceived to be the betrayal that it later came to be portrayed as. The

⁷¹² Jean-Jacques Jordi, 'Khélifa Haroud: harki 1957-1967', in *Des hommes et des femmes en guerre d'Algérie*, ed. by Jean-Charles Jauffret, (Paris, 2003), p.370.

⁷¹³ Ibid. p.360; Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki: Le bouleversant témoignage d'une enfant de la guerre d'Algérie*, with Marie-Christine Ray, (Paris, 2005), p.71.

French had been in Algeria for more than a century and during that time had fought numerous wars with the assistance of colonial troops. Many *harkis* had fathers and grandfathers who had served in the French army during two World Wars. These men were justifiably proud of their service records and their children were raised on their war stories. Brahmin Sadouni's father, injured by a shell while serving as an artilleryman in the Second World War, would say of his scars: 'Tu vois mon fils, ces petites choses, je les ai gagnées avec mon sang et grâce à mon courage'.⁷¹⁴ Even those without connections to the *harkis*, such as Zorah, an Algerian living in Paris were still able to appreciate the importance of this legacy of combat, remarking 'l'Algérie à l'époque, c'était comme qui dirait un département, comme le 75 aujourd'hui... Alors, faire la guerre à côté des Français, c'était normal'.⁷¹⁵

This is linked to the broader question of whether we can speak of the Algerian population being nationalist. Benjamin Stora has argued that the extent of French penetration and domination, combined with their strategy of political, cultural, and ideological depersonalisation meant that the FLN found themselves in the minority and having to 'se battre contre des gens qui n'auraient plus de conscience d'appartenance nationale'.⁷¹⁶ In support of this contention, Stora recounts an interview conducted in 1975 by the journalist Guy Sitbon with Ali, a *harki*. When asked about having fought 'contre ton peuple', Ali replied:

On parlait pas de peuple à La Chiffa, à La Chiffa on parlait de La Chiffa, c'est tout. Il n'y avait pas de journaux, il n'y avait pas de radio. On savait rien à La Chiffa. On savait seulement qu'il y avait la guerre.⁷¹⁷

The majority of *harkis* were from rural areas far from the political decision-making centres and knew little of what was happening beyond their immediate environs, especially given the extremely high rates of illiteracy. In these circumstances it was not really possible to betray one's brothers because *harkis* did not conceive of the war in such politicised terms. 'L'histoire, nous la subissons' argued one *supplétif*, casting himself and his fellow *harkis* as pawns in a game whose wider context they were almost entirely ignorant of.⁷¹⁸ These comments are echoed in Kerchouche's description of her father's enrolment: 'Il ne sait pas, au moment où il appose une croix en guise de paraphe, au bas de son contrat, qu'il devient un

⁷¹⁴ Brahmin Sadouni, *Français sans patrie: La Reconnaissance*, (Rouen, 1985), p.33.

⁷¹⁵ Yamina Benguigui, *Mémoires d'immigrés: L'héritage Maghrébin*, (Paris, 1997), p.93.

⁷¹⁶ Benjamin Stora and Dimitri Nicolaïdis, 'Cicatriser l'Algérie: Entretien avec Benjamin Stora', in *Oublier nos crimes: L'amnésie nationale, une spécialité française?*, ed. by Dimitri Nicolaïdis, (Paris, 2002), p.206.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid. p.206.

⁷¹⁸ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.57.

'*harki*', un traître à une cause qu'il ne connaît pas et qui le dépasse'.⁷¹⁹ This adds great poignancy to his confession: 'Moi, je n'ai jamais choisi la France, je me suis toujours considéré comme algérien'.⁷²⁰

However, feeling oneself to be Algerian did not automatically equate to enrolling in the FLN, not least because actually joining was no easy matter. The nature of the guerrilla war being waged forced the FLN to operate restrictive selection procedures. Much is made of French troops not knowing whom they could trust, but the FLN were in a similar position, especially once the French actively started recruiting the indigenous population. On a practical level, the FLN were simply not able to equip, arm, and feed a large force, while ancestral and personal rivalries further limited intake. Finally, in the later stages of the war when victory was regarded as imminent, many within the FLN became anxious about potentially having to share their spoils with a slew of last-minute recruits.⁷²¹ Not only was a positive choice to side with the FLN problematic, many Algerians were repulsed by the conduct of the FLN, in particular their brutality, which was often indiscriminate. 'Nous aurions pu être fier d'aider nos frères' testified one *harki* spouse, 's'ils n'avaient pas été si violents et autoritaires'.⁷²² Chafing under demands for food and money as well as arbitrary rules such as the prohibition on smoking, the fact that many FLN soldiers 'ne se comportaient pas en hommes d'honneur' in a society where honour was extremely highly valued, was the last straw.⁷²³ Furthermore, the general atmosphere of suspicion that reigned during the war meant that many *harkis* had family members killed by the FLN in the course of collective reprisals, cases of mistaken identity, or simply because they were rumoured to harbour pro-French sympathies. This pushed some, if not directly into the arms of the French, then certainly away from the militant cause.⁷²⁴ No one could have predicted the outcome of the conflict, but this in itself was a further factor that drew the *harkis* into the French camp. The French had been such a dominant fact of life for so long that for many it was inconceivable that they would eventually be vanquished by 'une poignée de révolutionnaires mal armés', especially given France's track-record at subduing rebellions in Algeria.⁷²⁵ To men like Ali Tayeb, France seemed 'invincible' and consequently 'nous n'imaginions pas un autre destin'.⁷²⁶ However, if the logic of obeying the 'maître de l'heure' was not sufficiently

⁷¹⁹ Dalila Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, (Paris, 2003), p.228.

⁷²⁰ Ibid, p.254.

⁷²¹ Mohand Hamoumou, 'Comment pouvait-on être harki?' *Migrations études*, 23 (December 1991), 2.

⁷²² Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.43.

⁷²³ Sabrina Kassa, *Nos ancêtres les Chibanis! Portrait d'Algériens arrivés en France pendant les Trente Glorieuses*, (Paris, 2006), p.116.

⁷²⁴ The same was of course true of the French and their behaviour undoubtedly influenced many Algerians to actively side with the nationalists.

⁷²⁵ Saïd Ferdi, *Un enfant dans la guerre*, (Paris, 1981) p.21.

⁷²⁶ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis harkis*, (Paris, 2006), p.60.

persuasive, the French were not above playing dirty in order to recruit, as Said Ferdi's experience illustrates.

In all of this, protection was paramount. Most *harkis* desired nothing more than to stay out of the conflict. However, the first FLN tract of the war clearly stated that neutrality was not an option since 'se désintéresser de la lutte est une trahison'.⁷²⁷ Algerians may have had very little in terms of material possessions, but what they did have was very precious to them and they sought above all to protect that, along with their families and themselves as best they could. Subjected to intimidation and exaction by both the FLN and the French, often the choice of side came down to the simple fact of who was the more willing to provide a rifle. This was the case for Ali:

Moi, je voulais un fusil. Quand il y a la guerre, pour vivre tranquille, il faut avoir un fusil...Mes trois cousins, ils étaient montés dans la montagne avec le FLN pour avoir un fusil. Mon frère et moi, on a manqué l'occasion...Alors quand l'officier français nous a dit qu'il allait nous donner un fusil, on n'a pas voulu manquer une autre occasion...⁷²⁸

However, the French were able to offer other, equally powerful, incentives, principally *la solde*. The war all but destroyed rural economies, leaving families destitute and many, including Kerchouche's father, eventually opted to enrol as *harkis* because they could see no other way to provide for their families. Assigned to the Groupe mobile de police rurale (GMPR) Kerchouche's father received a monthly wage of 250 francs; a relative fortune at the time for such families.⁷²⁹ Yet it was also not uncommon for one member of a family to become a *harki* and use his wages to support the entire family, while his other male relatives fought for the less financially remunerative FLN.

Such divisions do not appear to have engendered great bitterness or animosity possibly because of the long history of engagement alongside the French and lack of political investment in the conflict which led many *harkis* to regard their actions as 'un travail comme un autre'.⁷³⁰ The idea of being employed to protect their own people is also a feature of numerous testimonies. Eric Taleb for example was asked by an illiterate *harki* to write a letter to his son explaining that his job was not to fight those who sought independence, but simply to guard the various farms in the region which would constitute the future wealth of a

⁷²⁷ Hamoumou, 'Comment pouvait-on être harki?', 7.

⁷²⁸ Benjamin Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie: L'immigration algérienne en France 1912-1992*, (Paris, 1992), p.403.

⁷²⁹ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.228.

⁷³⁰ Ibid. p.228.

sovereign Algeria.⁷³¹ There is also an insistence on their lack of active combat with *harkis* specifically stating that neither they, nor those in their units, ever actually killed Algerians. ‘J’ai fait mal à personne,’ Ali insisted, ‘Jamais j’ai tiré avec mon fusil, sauf deux ou trois fois à l’instruction. Je savais pas tirer’.⁷³²

Ultimately, becoming a *harki* was less a choice and more of a practical necessity, or a last resort. ‘Enfin voilà, je pense que 95% des supplétifs ne se sont pas engagés pour le plaisir’ asserts Ali Tebib, an assessment that chimes with Homer Sutton’s description of the *harkis* as ‘neither heroes nor traitors’ but rather ‘exemplary victims of a colonial system which confiscated their choices’.⁷³³ What comes across most strongly from the available testimonies is that there was no grand patriotic narrative, or indeed any overarching rationale, simply a collection of individuals forced to respond to the particular and extreme situations they found themselves in. These accounts reflect a desire on the part of *harkis* to evoke the context in which their actions were taken and, in light of this, to justify decisions that retrospectively seemed incomprehensible to many external observers.

Exile: ‘Pour moi, une autre guerre commençait’

In July 1962 independence was celebrated throughout Algeria. However, for those who had been engaged on the losing side this was less a new dawn than the beginning of a nightmare: ‘Pour moi’ Khélifa Haroud stated, ‘une autre guerre commençait’.⁷³⁴ Regarding the terrible violence that swept Algeria that summer, the *harkis* remain largely silent. When the massacres are mentioned it is either in general terms to evoke the climate of terror which reigned at the time, or specific events are described in the context of this being the particular point at which they realised they had to leave Algeria in order to save their own lives. For Brahim Sadouni’s uncle, this moment came when he witnessed the beating to death of a nineteen year old auxiliary by the FLN while the French army stood by: ‘J’étais bouleversé. Comment pouvait-on faire preuve de tant de violence contre un adolescent? La France qui l’avait enrôlé, avait permis qu’il soit lynché sans le moindre simulacre de justice’.⁷³⁵

The actual moment of departure tended to be sudden. Often the French would simply arrive without warning to evacuate the luckier *harkis*. ‘Un départ complètement improvisé!’ is how one *fils de harkis* described it. ‘Personne n’avait été averti...Nous sommes partis les mains vides...Tout s’est arrêté d’un coup, figé d’un coup, comme s’il y avait eu une éruption

⁷³¹ Éric Taleb, *La fin des harkis*, (Paris, 1972), p.175.

⁷³² Stora, *Ils venaient*, p.404.

⁷³³ Cited in Kassa, *Nos ancêtres*, p.122; Homer B. Sutton, ‘Postcolonial Voices: Vindicating the *Harkis*’, *Contemporary French Civilization*, 20 (1996), 238.

⁷³⁴ Cited in Jordi, ‘Khélifa Haroud’, p.365.

⁷³⁵ Sadouni, *Français sans patrie*, p.19. In contrast to these personal testimonies, narratives offered on behalf of the *harkis* often dwell at length and in vivid detail on violence committed by the FLN.

volcanique. C'était la panique...' ⁷³⁶ For those who were forced to make their own way, either to the nearest French barracks or port, the need to conceal their intentions for fear of being stopped and captured by the FLN again meant travelling light. Even once passage to France had been secured, feelings appear to have been very mixed. Relief, regret, sadness, anxiety over the uncertainty of what awaited them on the other side of the Mediterranean, all these emotions are attested to in the sources. The most common references are to the tears of the woman as the boats pulled out of the port. For Khélifa Haroud's wife 'c'était dur...j'étais contente, mon mari était bien vivant, mes enfants étaient là. Dieu merci, mais j'ai pleuré'. ⁷³⁷ Others may have kept their grief to themselves, but they felt the loss of their homeland just as acutely. For Ali, there was a sharp contrast between the happiness of the returning French conscripts and the despair of auxiliaries such as himself. 'Quand la sirène du bateau a retenti, ce fut un déchirement. Nous regardions s'éloigner notre pays'. ⁷³⁸ There is a clear sense that these men and their families were aware of the permanence of the rupture they were experiencing in a way that was perhaps not true for some of the *pieds-noirs* also aboard.

Arrival in France: 'C'est l'un des plus mauvais souvenirs que je garde'.

The next point of anchorage for the memories of the *harkis* were the camps through which the majority passed upon their arrival in France. In contrast to the brevity of accounts of their departure, much more testimony is available concerning this period in their lives. The other noticeable difference is a shift away from the predominantly masculine narratives through which histories of the war are largely articulated. In recollections of the *centres d'accueil*, where the daily, the domestic, and the private spheres assumed greater importance, the voices of women are more present. What characterises these accounts are evocations of atrocious accommodation situations where 'rien n'avait été prévu, ni sanitaires, ni eau'. ⁷³⁹ Arrival was particularly traumatic because these men and woman of the *bled* arrived in France with literally the clothes on their backs at the beginning of what was to become the coldest winter on record only to find themselves living in canvas military tents. 'Tout le monde, ou presque, était en djellaba et pieds nus et il a fallu passer l'hiver dans cette terre et dans la neige' remembered one, while for Khélifa Haroud 'Il y a bien un poêle mais il n'y a pas de bois disponible!'. ⁷⁴⁰ There was, furthermore, insufficient space to house all the *harkis*, especially given the large average family size. Overcrowding and the consequent enforced proximity

⁷³⁶ Jacques Delarue, 'La malediction des enfants de harkis', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, 26 (January-March 1992), 30

⁷³⁷ Jordi, 'Khélifa Haroud', p.365.

⁷³⁸ Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis*, p.54.

⁷³⁹ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.67.

⁷⁴⁰ Delarue, 'La malédiction', 31; Jordi, 'Khélifa Haroud', p.370.

rendered privacy impossible and conflict inevitable, prompting *harkis* to ask: 'Pourquoi nous met-on en prison? Quel crime a-t-on commis?'⁷⁴¹

Out of this misery however, emerged a strong sense of community and an awareness of the importance of mutual support in the absence of external sources. Quotidian difficulties served to erase the distance between people with the result that 'nous avons établi une fraternité, même si c'était une fraternité du malheur'.⁷⁴² This community and way of life remained deliberately traditional. Many accounts speak of having recreated a little piece of Algeria in France in the sense of living close to neighbours, continuing to speak Arabic or Berber, eating traditionally prepared food, maintaining customary styles of dress, and struggling over the right to give their children Algerian names instead of the French *prénoms* the social workers tried to force upon them, a practice begun in 1965 and abandoned only in 1975. As one *filis de harki* put it, 'j'ai grandi comme si j'avais grandi en Algérie'.⁷⁴³

However, while this fidelity to traditions undoubtedly provided a reassuring sense of continuity for this *deraciné* group, it also had negative consequences, retarding their integration and thus reinforcing their isolation, as Besnaci-Lancou observed, 'Ils sont restés figés dans l'Algérie de 1962'.⁷⁴⁴ As far as the *harkis* themselves were concerned, they simply viewed the perpetuations of their traditions as a way to 'rester entre soi, pour demeurer soi' in the midst of an alien and unstable world.⁷⁴⁵ 'Dans leur tête, ils n'ont jamais renoncé à leur pays' Kerchouche says of her parents, 'le foulard de ma mère teint bon sur ses cheveux, elle s'achète des kilos de figues de Barabrie – sa Madeleine à elle. Mon père, lui, porte toujours sa djellaba et son turban de montagnard'.⁷⁴⁶ These practical manifestations of nostalgia are echoed in wistful references to an Algeria to which there was officially no option of return to, not even to visit family or their graves. Understandably, in contrast to the insalubrious and oppressive nature of institutional life, Algeria was often presented as 'une terre de lait et miel', even though the reality of the lives that these people left behind was the hard one of poverty and subsistence living. It is less the material conditions that are missed than the general ambiance, in particular the freedom to live their lives as they wished, a freedom that was taken from them when the war broke out. Unlike *pied-noir* memories, nostalgia is not something this generation seek to mobilise towards a particular end, it is therefore not collectivised, but rather a personal part of their everyday lives. Forgetting your country of birth is no easy matter as Ali discovered: 'J'ai décidé de partir pour oublier. Mais apparemment,

⁷⁴¹ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.56.

⁷⁴² Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.81.

⁷⁴³ Saïd Bouamama, *Jeunes Manosquins issus de l'immigration algérienne: Héritiers involontaires de la guerre d'Algérie*, (Manosque, 2003), p.17

⁷⁴⁴ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.79.

⁷⁴⁵ Saliha Abdellatif, 'Les Français-musulmans ou le poids de l'histoire à travers la communauté Picarde', *Les Temps Modernes*, 452-453-454 (March-April-May 1984), 1838

⁷⁴⁶ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.187.

c'est le contraire qui s'est produit. Depuis que je suis parti, le manque d'Algérie est devenu intense, 24h sur 24'.⁷⁴⁷ Indeed the evidence suggests that the closer these individuals get to the end of their lives, the more acute their homesickness becomes. 'Maintenant que je suis très vieux, je repense tous les jours à mon pays', Lakhdar tells Besnaci-Lancou, 'tout me manque. Même mon âme de l'époque me manque'.⁷⁴⁸

'Un peu de colère contre la France'?

'Je suis algérien avant d'être français, ça, personne ne peut l'effacer', Ali Tebib defiantly states when explaining his refusal to give his children French names.⁷⁴⁹ His words reflect the stronger sense of an Algerian identity that emerges from these personal testimonies than is often found in the pronouncements of the associations and spokespeople that constitute the community's public face. This is in all probability due to the combination of the leadership of these organisations resting in the hands of the second generation for whom France is their actual homeland, even if they nonetheless retain a strong sense of their Algerian heritage, and the practical necessity of stressing the ties that bind the *harkis* to France as part of demands put to the state for recognition and recompense. It is also the case that the majority of *harkis* are French according to their identity papers, thus adding legal confirmation to an identity long assumed for the community by veterans, *pieds-noirs*, and even certain Algerians.⁷⁵⁰ But behind these *cartes d'identité* lies a complicated relationship to France that is many things but never indifferent.

For Kerchouche, becoming French did not lead to any tangible improvement in the situation of her parents. As she sarcastically observed, 'La carte d'identité ne les réchauffe pas, ne nourrit pas leurs enfants et ne change rien à leurs conditions de vie'.⁷⁵¹ Given all that she learns of their treatment at the hands of the French, Kerchouche finds it difficult to understand why her parents do not display even 'un peu de colère' towards France. Her mother's response is: 'Non...La France nous a sauvé la vie. Que veux-tu qu'on demande de

⁷⁴⁷ Cited in Kassa, *Nos ancêtres*, p.117.

⁷⁴⁸ Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis*, p.13.

⁷⁴⁹ Cited in Kassa, *Nos ancêtres*, p.120.

⁷⁵⁰ Under French rule the majority of Algerians possessed only the *statut civil de droit local*. Upon independence, all indigenous inhabitants, including *harkis*, became Algerians. Thus once they arrived in France it was necessary for them to obtain a 'déclaration reconnaitive de la nationalité française' by appearing before a judge. Closing in January 1963, the window of opportunity for this conversion was narrow. Although not all *harkis* wished to renounce their Algerian identity, many were simply not given a choice in the matter. For further details see Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, pp.231-242.

⁷⁵¹ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, p.62.

plus?’⁷⁵² Others are however, less stoical about their experiences as the following passage from Brahim Sadouni’s autobiography demonstrates:

ABANDONNÉS, oui, ils viennent de les abandonner, sans armes, privés de tous moyens d’existence, devant leur sort...Était-ce vraiment possible que la France puisse abandonner de façon si légère et aussi rapide, ceux qui avaient toujours cru en elle? La déception se lisait sur tous les visages désillusionnés.⁷⁵³

One recurrent theme is that France broke her promise to the *harkis*. Even if they were not ideologically committed to the French cause, the *harkis* did their job and were loyal, as Malek emphasises, ‘jusqu’au bout’. ‘J’ai rempli ma part au contrat avec l’État français’, he concludes, ‘J’attends toujours qu’il remplisse sa part de contrat’.⁷⁵⁴ Beyond betrayal and abandonment at the close of the war, subsequent marginalisation in France further fuelled bitterness among certain *harkis*. ‘J’étais complètement anéanti,’ Besnaci-Lancou’s uncle tells her, ‘quelques semaines auparavant j’étais militaire d’une grande nation démocratique et à présent, je devais me cacher comme un rat, de surcroît en France’.⁷⁵⁵

In spite of this, expressions of regret are less common than one would expect. Sadouni’s uncle claims to see this feeling etched ‘sur tous les visages des *harkis* que je croisais’, but if he is correct then it seems to be a deeply internalised emotion rather than something that is regularly articulated.⁷⁵⁶ More common are stoical demeanours from men who seem resigned to their fate, men like Lounes who states ‘Moi, je suis fataliste. Je me dis que Dieu avait déjà tracé ma vie et que c’était comme ça’.⁷⁵⁷ However, it is possible that the more active mobilisation of these recollections by spokespeople and associations will return a sharp edge to the sense of injustice that is clearly present within these men and women, but has been vocalised principally by their children. Collectivising the past, particularly when, as with the work of Azni, this is directed towards legalistic ends, may well reignite the latent anger contained within the community, especially given the heightened commemorative climate surrounding the war in general. On the other hand, with the French state continuing to take steps forward in terms of according recognition to the *harkis*, through the Journée nationale d’hommage, this agitation may be counteracted.

⁷⁵² Ibid, p.16.

⁷⁵³ Sadouni, *Français sans patrie*, pp.140-141.

⁷⁵⁴ Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis*, p.18.

⁷⁵⁵ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, p.96.

⁷⁵⁶ Sadouni, *Français sans patrie*, p.7.

⁷⁵⁷ Cited in Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis*, p.46.

Missing Elements

As more testimony comes to light, an increasingly rich and nuanced history is being built up that incorporates the experiences of the *harkis* and of their families. There remains, however, one significant lacuna in that has already been briefly mentioned but merits a more detailed consideration: active combat. The growing body of information concerning the war focuses overwhelmingly on enrolment and abandonment, both events that tend to reinforce the notion of the *harkis* as powerless victims responding as best they could to circumstances beyond their control. There are very few references to what *harkis* did as *harkis*, while those who do mention this aspect are keen to place their duties under the remit of ‘protecting’ civilians as opposed to fighting enemies. There is a marked reluctance among *harkis* to place themselves definitively on one side as opposed to the other, preferring to cast themselves as an intermediary force. Extending the problematisation of the idea of choice, these are also deeply passive accounts that downplay, if not deny altogether, agency on the part of the *auxillaires*.

Within this gap there is a further blank space regarding those *harkis* who were employed in the FPA, which was created in 1959 by Michel Debré but is most closely associated with Maurice Papon who commanded the Paris-based units. Not only is no reference made to these *harkis* from within the community itself, this aspect of history is also notable by its absence from academic works. Discussion of FPA *harkis* is therefore mainly provided in works dealing with the repression conducted against the Algerian community in France during the war. It is however, also possible to find references made to the FPA by those who have traditionally sought to speak on behalf of the *harki* community. ‘Le bilan de leur action est éloquent’ judged the Bachaga, while for Georges Fleury, ‘leurs méthodes font à nouveau merveille’.⁷⁵⁸ Both men thus deliberately place the FPA *harkis* within the same ideological context as themselves, casting them as committed defenders of the *Algérie-française* cause.

In contrast to these self-interested renderings, several reasons can be advanced for the silence among *harkis* themselves. First, in practical terms, those who served as part of the FPA were already in France at the end of the war. They therefore would have been better placed to avoid the *centres d’accueil* and disperse into the general population, especially after being made titular *gardiens de la paix* by Papon on 1 July 1962. Second, in common with the other *harkis*, supportive *cadres sociaux* were absent in the years initially following 1962. However, unlike the *harkis* who spent the war in Algeria, no such frameworks have subsequently emerged which would facilitate the articulation of these memories. In fact, with the increasing amount of attention devoted to 17 October 1961, from the perspective of

⁷⁵⁸ Bachaga Saïd Boualam, *Les harkis au service de la France*, (Paris, 1963), p.220; Georges Fleury, *Le combat des harkis*, (Versailles, 1989), p.120

exposing the scale and wider context in which this brutal act of repression was committed and then covered up, the conditions in which these *harkis* might be encouraged to speak out are rapidly deteriorating. Finally, to return to the issues of agency and victimhood, the highly specialised nature of the FPA's work leaves little room for the fluidity and ambiguity that features in other accounts of *harki* duties. This is important in several respects, not least because it raises the question of who or what lies behind the imperative to divest the role of *harki* of any combative element, and why? Is it those offering the information or those asking the questions who are responsible for this decontextualising silence?

The answer is inevitably both and neither. Both because of the advantages of a largely depoliticised reading of the *harki* experience that exist for both parties; and neither because of the wider frameworks in which the war has been represented in France which established parameters and conventions that placed restrictions, explicit and implicit, upon the narratives that could be articulated. However, with the passage of time and evolutions in the political and social environment, the edges of this silence are beginning to fray. Again this is a development that seems to be driven simultaneously by the individuals involved and the contexts in which they have found themselves. Advances in knowledge about the war have produced greater acceptance of the complexity of these eight years and a greater willingness to examine the more uncomfortable and controversial elements. This is demonstrated by a growing advocacy among association leaders such as Besnaci-Lancou of the need for the past to be assumed in its entirety. 'Il n'est alors pas question, pour nous' she writes, 'de glorifier cette histoire, voire de la mystifier ou, dans certains cas extrêmes, de la refouler'; a stance notably not shared by Azni.⁷⁵⁹ It is also reflected in the nature of the testimonies being disseminated that support the wider perception that this was a war from which no one emerged unsullied. As Moussa openly admits, 'personne n'est sorti tout blanc de cette histoire'.⁷⁶⁰ Finally, increasingly sophisticated treatments of phenomena such as responsibility and culpability appear to be fostering a willingness to speak about previously taboo, or certainly stigmatised aspects of the *harki* past. Thus while the practice of torture within the French army has been discussed by *harkis* since *Les années algériennes*, today these acts are being given a much more specific historical grounding. They are also notably becoming acts over which direct ownership is being taken and accounts in which agency is being reclaimed. In *Treize chibanis harkis*, for example, Malek shows off his teeth which are all false on account of 'Un homme très sadique' who 's'amusa à nous les casser', but this is juxtaposed with the contrition of Tayeb who regrets the war because 'elle a été violente et que j'ai assisté à toutes sortes d'horreurs'.⁷⁶¹ Although it is currently more the exception than the rule,

⁷⁵⁹ Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis*, p.85.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid. p.78.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid. pp.18, 61.

Besnaci-Lancou's book, which builds on the generally bi-partisan ethos of her activism, suggests that in some cases the exhortations of academics such as Stora to move beyond accusation, moralisation, and memory, into more distanced, critical, and historicised understandings of the war and its participants is beginning to filter downwards. As Besnaci-Lancou herself acknowledges, 'Cette histoire nous appartient, mais elle n'est pas notre propriété'.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶² Ibid. p.85.

Conclusion

‘Although memory sustains hegemony, it also subverts it through its capacity to recollect and restore alternative discourses the dominant world would simply bleach out and forget’.⁷⁶³ Using the case study of the Algerian War of Independence, this thesis has focused on two particular alternative collective discourses and the groups that have been the vehicles for them; the *pieds-noirs* and the *harkis*. Exploring their activities since 1962 has complicated the conventional narrative and periodisation of the development of the memory of the war, replacing the perception of a stark dichotomy between absence prior to the 1990s and presence after this point with a more nuanced reality. Although *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* have shared the common goal of legitimating their interpretation of the past within the national historical narrative, which has created numerous points of interaction and exchange, fundamentally their collective memories have evolved according to distinct trajectories.

With respect to the *pieds-noirs*, to speak of a community of interconnected individuals is not simply convenient shorthand, but a valid description of the reality as perceived by those both within and without the group. As Yves Monier told *PNM* readers, ‘J’ai parlé plus haut de l’importance des filiations. Dans la vie pied-noire, c’est un dogme’.⁷⁶⁴ Enshrining this commitment within the formal structure of an associational nexus has arguably been *the* defining evolution that the *pieds-noirs* have undergone since arriving in France, enabling them to progress from a collection of disparate individuals to an organised and mobilised memory carrier. Averell Manes speaks of the ‘cluster’ nature of the population, arguing that the *pied-noirs* make up for what they lack in terms of national resonance through the vibrancy of their local activities which are predominantly concentrated in the south. However, issues such as indemnification and individuals such as Jacques Roseau demonstrate that such provincialism can be overcome. Furthermore, associations such as the Cercle Algérieniste have branches across France and *PNM* is not a region-specific publication, while unity beyond the local level is evidenced through the *pied-noir* lexicon, which was centralised and codified in tandem with the development of the associational movement.

In spite of certain basic similarities to other memory carriers, the *pied-noir* community represents a unique way of ‘doing’ memory work in France that can be summarised as the duality of a static content deployed within an evolving context. With the rudiments of their lexicon established very quickly in individual memoirs, the rise of associations as the primary vehicles for collective memory enabled the elements of this

⁷⁶³ Richard Terdiman cited in Jim House and Neil MacMaster, “‘Une journée portée disparue’: The Paris Massacre of 1961 and Memory”, in *Crisis and Renewal in France 1918-1962*, ed. by Kenneth Moore and Martin S. Alexander, (New York, 2002), p.285.

⁷⁶⁴ Yves Monier, ‘Comment devenir Pieds-Noirs’, *PNM*, 71 (September 1996), 23.

patrimony to be codified and then effectively mobilised in a range of situations and against an array of targets. The application of this well-established and widely-adhered to lexicon to the changing situation in France with respect to the War of Independence, and indeed discussions of the nation's imperial past in general, characterises the *pieds-noirs* as a textbook example of 'cloistered remembering' taken to extremes. This has become particularly true in the course of the last two decades, which have seen the community and its leaders turning inwards and moving further from the orbit of conventional historical and commemorative discourse. Although the *pieds-noirs* are not immune from social, cultural and economic developments, theirs is an increasingly enclosed world whose links to the mainstream are becoming progressively more tenuous and strained. This, in combination with a lexicon that has evolved to such a stage that it is akin to a weapon on permanent standby, instinctively deployed at the slightest perceived provocation, means that associations tend to simply react to events without actually engaging with them. Again, this is intimately connected to the fact that history and memory are, for many *pied-noir* associations, not things they wish to investigate in order to understand, but rather factual givens that everyone else needs to accept.

The persistence of colonial images, attitudes, and arguments within *pied-noir* publications makes it hard to avoid the conclusion that the *pied-noir* community have not been decolonised. When they arrived in France in 1962, *pied-noir* perspectives regarding the French empire coincided with those of many within the Hexagon. Since then the debate has moved on and this aspect of France's past is evaluated in very different terms. The *pied-noir* community, however, has not moved on, causing their imperial hangover to become more pronounced with the passing of time. As the lobby in favour of Article 4 of Loi 2005-158 indicated, the *pieds-noirs* are not entirely isolated.⁷⁶⁵ But even within this milieu, they stand apart in the degree to which they subscribe to a wholly positive view of colonisation, certainly in Algeria, rather than simply accepting certain beneficial elements. This standpoint is informed by the underlying belief that consistency and absolutism are indicators of veracity and that acknowledging any merit in competing interpretations is tantamount to undermining the entire *pied-noir* edifice, something illustrated by the community's relationship with Jacques Roseau. As General Jouhaud told the annual congress of the Cercle Algérieniste in 1978, 'Un combat désespéré n'est jamais perdu si ceux qui l'ont mené restent fidèles aux sentiments nobles qui l'ont commandé'.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶⁵ A survey conducted by CSA and *Le Figaro* reported that 64 per cent of the population were favourable to the law of which 15 per cent were 'tout à fait favorable' and 49 per cent 'plutôt favorable'. For the full breakdown of opinions see: www.csa-tmo.fr/dataset/data2005/opi20051130a.htm [14 February 2009] Also cited in Dunwoodie, 'Postface', 324.

⁷⁶⁶ Général Edmond Jouhaud, 'Congrès de Tours', *L'Algérieniste*, 5.2 (15 March 1978), 51.

These traits are not, however, simply *pied-noir* hallmarks, but also survival mechanisms, particularly when combined with their innate sense of victimisation. In 1999, Annette Wieviorka argued that ‘la mémoire n’existe que si elle est présente dans l’espace public de façon quasi-permanente par une agitation et des conflits, et qu’une mémoire qui n’est plus conflictuelle est une mémoire qui finalement n’a plus de vitalité’.⁷⁶⁷ This description is particularly apt with respect to the *pieds-noirs* whose conflictual relationships with the media, academics, and Algerians, as well as with members of their own community, represents the continuation of the War of Independence through alternative means. Ultimately, what the *pied-noir* community are searching for is recognition on their own terms. Their quest is however, dependent upon the perception of the continuing indifference and hostility of the French, an impression formulated at the point of arrival and nurtured by associations and individuals ever since, as indicated by Pierre Dimech’s concluding remarks on *désinformation*:

Contre cet monde aux mille réseaux, au financement illimité, aux appuis et complices en embuscade aux postes stratégiques de notre société, nous nous battons et continuons à nous battre à mains nues. Jusqu’à notre dernier soufflé. Et même au-delà.⁷⁶⁸

If the *pied-noir* community ever received what they demand from the French nation, they would have nothing to define themselves against and thus their specificity and collective identity would disappear. However, the uncompromising and radical nature of their agenda means that it is unlikely to ever be fulfilled, or certainly not in a way that satisfies the majority of associations. As proof, one can look to the recent steps that have been taken towards recognising the *pieds-noirs* within wider official commemorative gestures, especially during Chirac’s presidency. These have done little to heal the wounds of the community and have generally been dismissed as insufficient or compromised by similar initiatives with respect to the Algerian community in France.

In contrast to the early mobilisation of the *pied-noir* community, but in line with the dominant explanatory paradigm concerning the memory of the war, absence was the situation that initially prevailed among the *harki* population. Far from indicating forgetting, a range of powerful economic, social, and cultural factors combined to inhibit the transmission of the recent past, even within family circles. This left *harki* descendants with many questions but

⁷⁶⁷ Annette Wieviorka, ‘Le Vel d’Hiv: histoire d’une commémoration’, in *Travail de mémoire 1914-1998. Une nécessité dans un siècle de violence*, (Paris, 1999), p.165.

⁷⁶⁸ Pierre Dimech, *La désinformation autour de la culture des pieds-noirs*, (Paris, 2006), p.93.

nowhere to look for answers other than to external memory carriers who had been constructing and disseminating narratives on behalf of their silent parents since the end of the war. Whether offered by the French and Algerian governments, Muslim elites, veterans, or *pieds-noirs*, all these representations sought to speak for the *harkis* in ways that served their own ideological and commemorative agendas. In the process of defining their own interpretation, the newly mobilised *filles de harkis* necessarily had recourse to these pre-existing tropes and, on certain occasions, to the actors behind them. However, they also quickly recognised that these were instrumentalised readings of the past and were therefore conscious of the importance of maintaining their independence as a collective, something that was often easier in theory than in practice. Formulated via a complex process of interchange and contestation, as well as incorporating their own experiences and memories, by 1991 the *filles de harkis* had confirmed themselves as a memory carrier with a unique voice directed towards obtaining recognition of the sacrifices made by their parents for France in order to rehabilitate them in the eyes of the nation.

Their timing was fortuitous because the increased public attention being devoted to the War of Independence and the concurrent escalation of competition amongst *porteurs de mémoire* to gain the ear of this newly attentive audience greatly heightened the importance of collective mobilisation. However, the medium through which the *filles de harkis* had chosen to pursue their demands, associations, proved incapable of withstanding these new pressures. Beneath a numerically healthy surface lay a diverse and highly fragmented movement incapable of surmounting these divisions in order to unify, except for brief periods of time. Breadth thus came at the expense of depth, although this was somewhat offset by the emergence of a series of prominent individuals whom the media latched onto as representative emblems for their community. From the practical grassroots militancy of Hacène Arfi and Abdelkrim Klech, to the media-savvy advocacy of Dalila Kerchouche and Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, via the judicially-orientated campaigns of Boussad Azni and the academic-activist bridge formed by Mohand Hamoumou, each was thrust into the public spotlight because something in their particular strategy resonated with the wider national mood concerning the war. However, in attempting to capitalise on this attention in order to promote the cause of their community, all except Kerchouche chose to place their actions under the rubric of associations of their own creation suggesting that with certain modifications this structure could be revitalised as an effective framework and vehicle for collective memories.

The by-product of the emergence of these ‘media stars’, but also of the diversity of their approaches to the protection and promotion of their communal history has been a growing willingness among the *harkis* to break their silence and offer testimony, not only to their *engagé* offspring, but to French society in general, finally deeming their experiences to

be both legitimate and valuable. Although more circuitous in its emergence, as well as less cohesive and combative than that of the *pied-noir* community, the collective memory being articulated by the *harki* community today seems better placed to stake a substantive and sustainable claim on the national memory. Having originally taken the lead, *pied-noir* associations have now lost the initiative with respect not only to their relationship with the *harki* community, but also more generally with respect to the commemorative agenda of the War of Independence. Yet in spite of this noticeable role reversal, there remains overlap in the activism of both communities that suggests certain common future orientations, albeit not similar successes. Key to this appears to be the evolving attitude of the state. Although this dissertation deliberately adopted a bottom-up exploration of collective memories, the state has been present throughout in various guises and relationships to the *pied-noir* and *harki* populations. Indeed, for Philip Dine it was the lack of a ‘properly consensual history’ emanating from above that led to memories of the war being cloistered within groups ‘with a case to plead or an axe to grind’.⁷⁶⁹ The increased willingness of the government to engage with and speak about the war since the 1990s has not altered this situation. In fact this greater involvement has, if anything, made things worse, causing the various private memory bearers to compete more ardently and more openly for the attention and favour of the state in order to get their particular take on the past adopted as part of the reconfigured official historical narrative. The 1990s are therefore a pivotal decade because they witnessed the resurrection of the state as an active and evolving collective memory carrier, which in turn catalysed and radicalised pre-existing sub-state processes of memory construction and articulation, bringing them to public attention on a national stage. Just as the impact of drawing a veil of silence over the Algerian episode in 1962 filtered downwards, obscuring and cloistering the recollections of the actors involved, when the government began to lift that veil, the ramifications of re-exposing these memories, which had previously been growing largely in the dark, travelled upwards.

In light of this, it is unsurprising that both *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* should have responded to this new context by re-orientating their activism more firmly towards official channels and institutions. With Vichy serving as their model, both communities are increasingly focusing their efforts on creating a compelling discourse of victimisation that they wish to see made sacrosanct, either by the French state or the French courts. For example, with the arrival on the scene of the Parti Pied-Noir (PPN) under the leadership of Christian Schembre, the *pied-noir* battle is being taken directly to the state in a manner that echoes RECOURS and Roseau, although the party has yet to enjoy successes on a

⁷⁶⁹ Philip Dine, *Images of the Algerian War: French Fiction and Film, 1954-1992*, (Oxford, 1994), p.236.

comparable scale.⁷⁷⁰ Furthermore, although the judicial endeavours of Véritas and Boussad Azni are perceived to offer a potentially fruitful strategy given the precedent established by the Vichy trials - despite some major obstacles, not least the amnesties laws - this is not, as the Vichy experience also illustrates, a method that will necessarily bring closure in the form of definitive verdicts on history. In the interim, pursuing history through the courts is likely only to further exacerbate memory wars by providing another arena in which to compete. Embodying the past in an inviolable public site such as the statute books does, however, offer a way to ensure transmission beyond the lifespan of living witnesses. It therefore provides one answer to the question of how to legitimate leaders without direct experience of the collective memories they are charged with carrying by giving them a widely recognised source external to their own communities from which to draw their authority.

Both these avenues essentially rely on the groups in question establishing themselves as victims. This is part of what Stora sees as a dangerous recent trend on a wider scale: ‘Alors qu’entre 1950 et 1980, des groupes sociaux...se positionnaient activement dans une critique de l’État, aujourd’hui ils se présentent essentiellement comme des victimes et veulent que l’État reconnaisse leur douleur’.⁷⁷¹ Victimisation was always a crucial part of the *pied-noir* lexicon that has only become more pronounced over time. For the *harkis* however, the irony is that while their actions have changed them from victims of the constructions of external commentators, to agency reclaiming activists, the discourse many promote is fundamentally framed by the idea that the community has been the casualty of a catalogue of betrayal and abandonment perpetrated by others. In both cases, pressing for recognition on these grounds represents a form of competition to be the ‘best’ victim that negates the suffering of others and thus perpetuates the ‘dialogue of the deaf’ aspect of memory wars.

This is the antithesis of Stora’s proposed remedy which, reflecting the thoughts of many other intellectuals who have concerned themselves with this phenomenon, is based on symbolic ‘reconnaissance et réparation’ in order to produce ‘une sorte de réconciliation des mémoires’.⁷⁷² As Robert Frank writes, ‘une bonne commémoration’ requires ‘une belle harmonie’ between the memory of protagonists, official memory, and public memory.⁷⁷³ However, for Peter Dunwoodie the fixation with what he calls the ‘fantasy’ of a single collective memory as an ‘instrument of national identity’ is not the solution, but part of the problem, particularly because it privileges memory over the more complex, evidence-based alternative of history, construes memory as a moral duty, and ignores the important functions

⁷⁷⁰ www.parti-piednoir.org/sommaire_texte.php3 [7 March 2008]

⁷⁷¹ Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère, *La guerre des mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial*, (Paris, 2007), p.41.

⁷⁷² For Stora in particular, the present climate demands that historians act as a ‘juge de paix de la réconciliation mémorielle’. Ibid. pp.89-91, 98.

⁷⁷³ Robert Frank, ‘Les troubles de la mémoire française’, in *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Rioux, (Paris, 1994), p.605.

fulfilled by forgetting.⁷⁷⁴ His criticism alludes to the already mentioned efforts to contain the wealth of postcolonial identities within the parameters of the one and indivisible Republic, a struggle that should alert us to the fact that fragmented, or cloistered, memories are not peculiar to the War of Independence, but rather a feature of the postcolonial period more generally. Furthermore, they are not inherently negative but can, in certain cases, be positive indicators of diversity and plurality. While it is clearly important for France to find a way to move beyond the current reductive and destructive *guerres de mémoire* and towards a more productive relationship to the Franco-Algerian past, the belief that this must be achieved within a single cohesive and consensual narrative, no matter how accommodating of plurality, is perhaps counter-productive. Recognising, as Philip Schlesinger and Peter Dunwoodie do, that 'National cultures are not simple repositories of shared symbols to which the population stands in identical relation', but rather 'sites of contestation in which competition over definition takes place' would perhaps allow attention to be diverted from the elusive (and possibly futile) quest for suitable shared symbols and narratives in which to anchor a national identity and towards the process of contestation and the competitors themselves.⁷⁷⁵ A thematic micro-history of the sort undertaken here therefore posits an alternative approach which, by challenging conventional paradigms and seeking to build knowledge and context from the ground upwards, may alter perspectives and ultimately yield new ways to tackle the larger questions of history and memory that continue to hang over the War of Independence and its legacies.

⁷⁷⁴ Peter Dunwoodie, 'Postface: History, Memory and Identity – Today's Crisis, Yesterday's Issue', *French History*, 20.3 (September 2006), 322-323.

⁷⁷⁵ Philip Schlesinger, 'On National Identity, Some Conceptions and Misconceptions Criticized', *Social Science Information*, 16 (1987), 260-1; cited in Dunwoodie, 'Postface', 322.

Appendices: Images

Appendix A



L'Algérieniste, 98 (June 2002), front cover

Appendix B



Achdé, 'Le gang du Sebou', *PNM*, 23 (February 1991), 40

Appendix B cont.



Achdé, 'Le gang du Sebou', *PNM*, 35 (April 1993), 42



Achdé, 'Le gang du Sebou', *PNM*, 36 (May 1993), 42

Appendix C



Yves Naz, 'La langue française en Algérie', *L'Algérieniste*, 81 (March 1998), 10-11

Appendix C cont.

L'Algérieniste

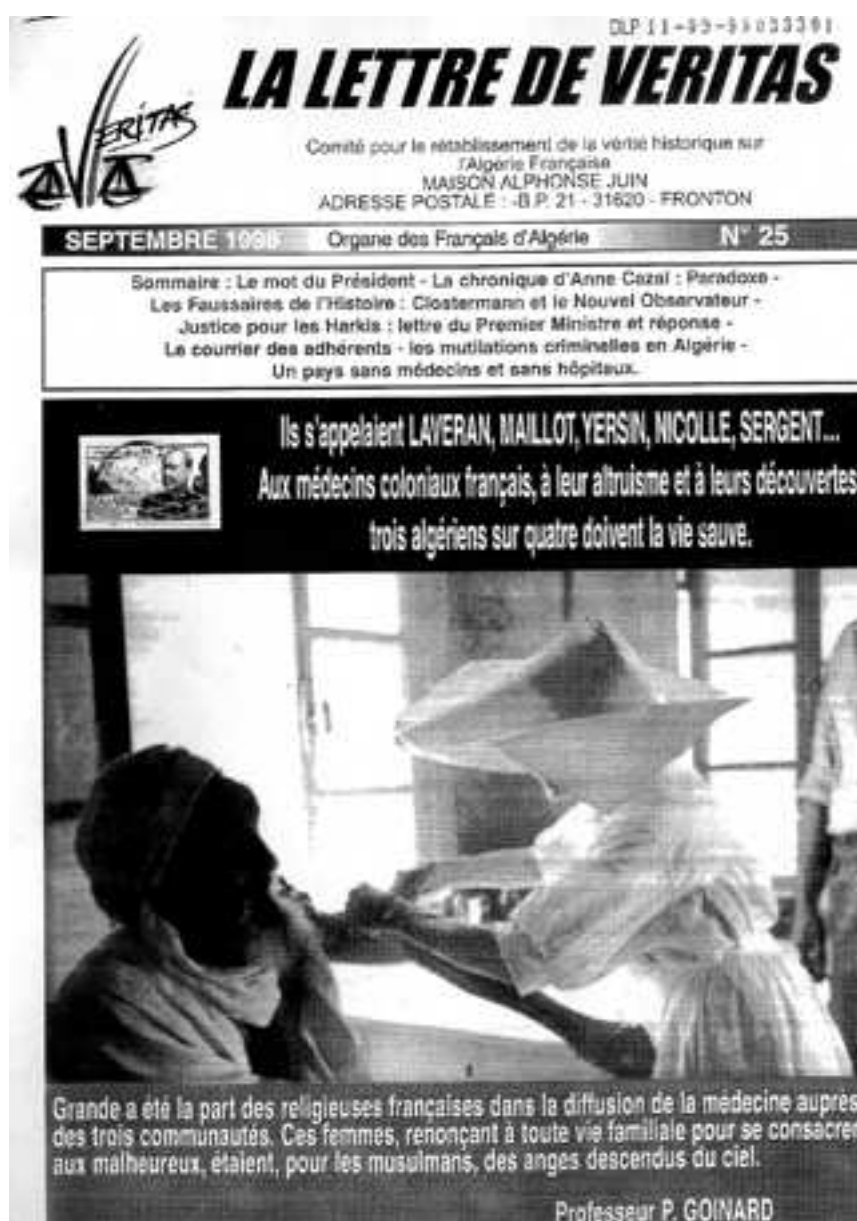
BULLETIN D'IDÉES ET D'INFORMATION

€ : 10 F — 8^e année — N° 14 — Nouvelle série — Trimestriel — 15 mai 1981



L'Algérieniste, 14 (May 1981), front cover

Appendix D



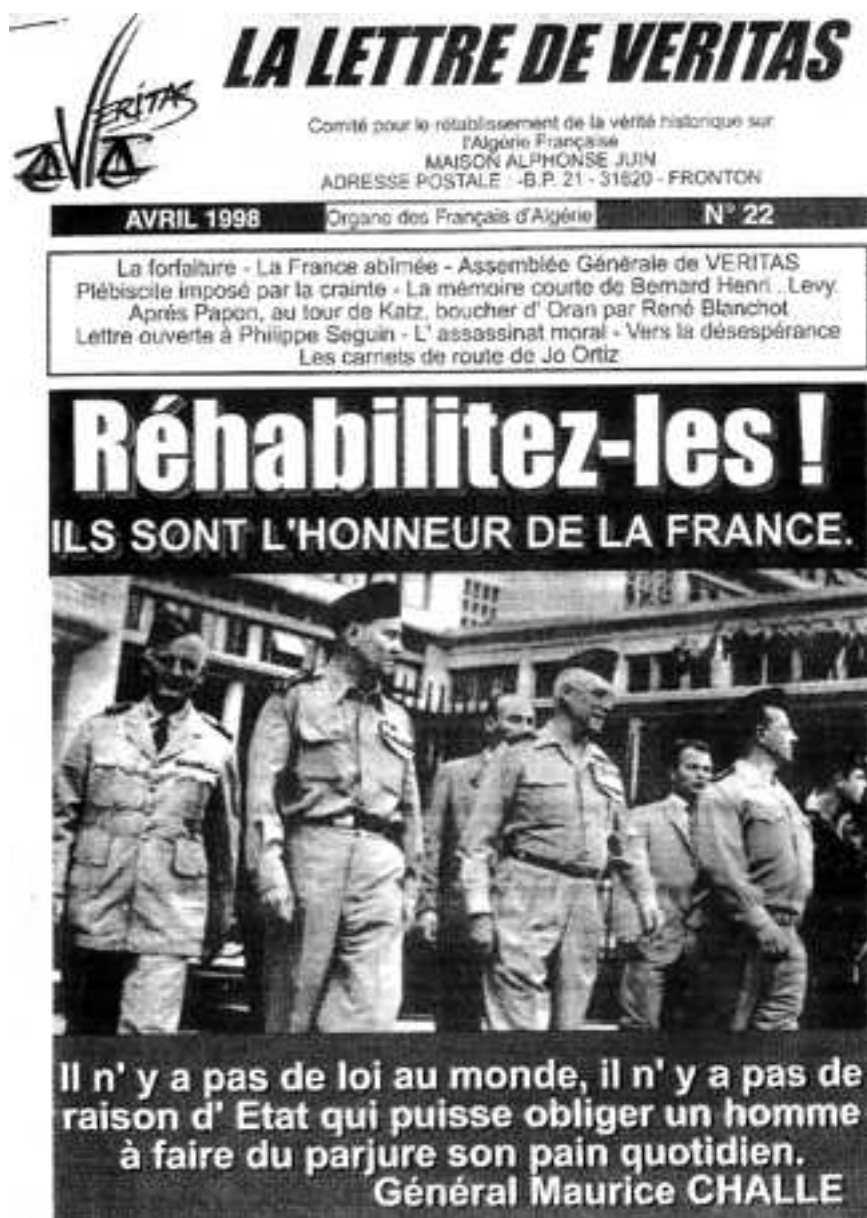
La lettre de Véritas, 25 (September 1998), front cover

Appendix E



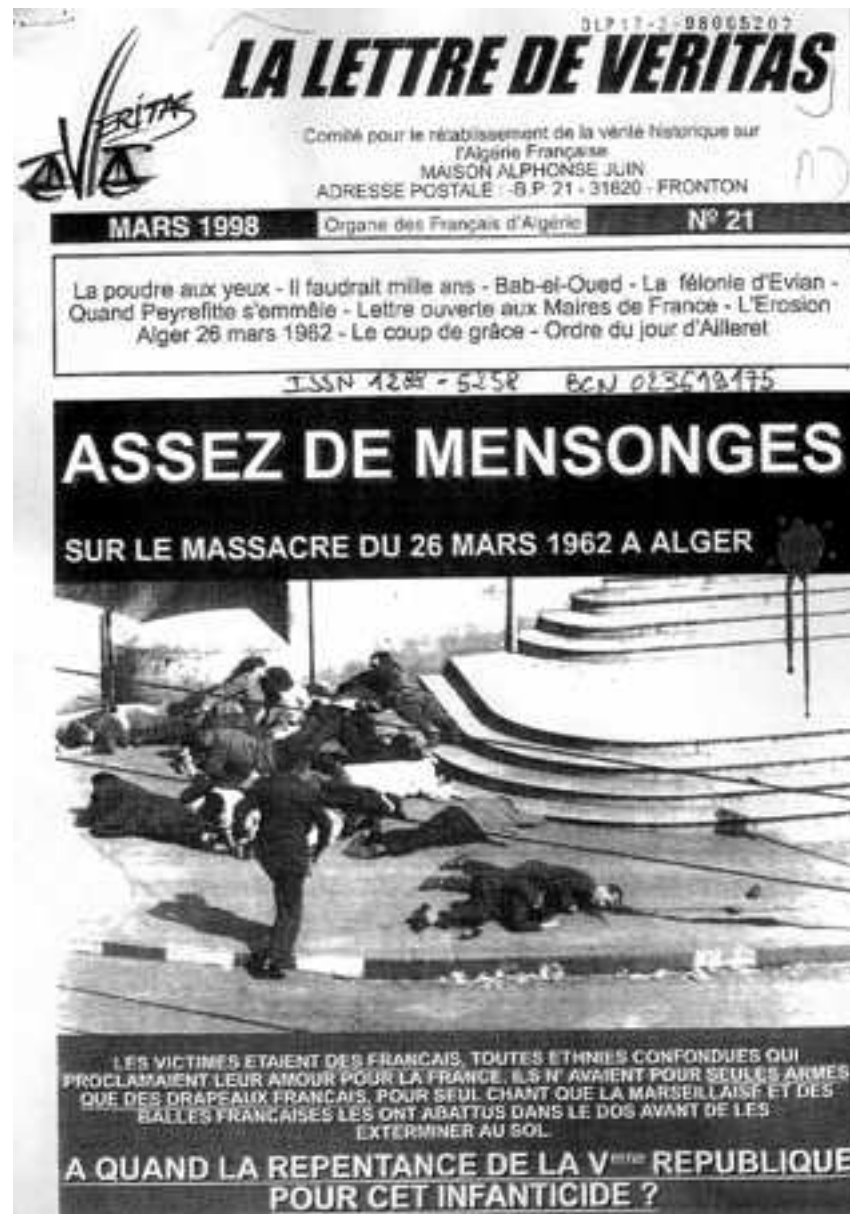
Aux échos d'Alger, 47 (September 1994), front cover

Appendix F



La lettre de Véritas, 22 (April 1998), front cover

Appendix G



La lettre de Véritas, 21 (March 1998), front cover

Appendix H

Autres exactions du F.L.N.



LES SOLDATS DU CONTINGENT
Dépeçés vivants jusqu'à l'os avant
d'être émasculés au couteau puis égorgés



LES JEUNES ENFANTS
A El Halia comme ailleurs, fillettes
et garçonnets violés avant d'être égorgés



LA POPULATION MUSULMANE
Villages entiers dévorés, femmes et enfants violés.
Hommes systématiquement émasculés
avant d'être égorgés



LES ATTENTATS URBAINS
Au Casino de la Corniche, dans les bars d'Alger.
Les fous, les malades, parfoir, même dans les cinémas
les innocents étaient pulvérisés au pistolet

Sans relâche, depuis cinq ans, VERITAS clame la vérité historique, la publie dans sa revue mensuelle adressée non seulement à nos adhérents mais à tous les politiques, ministres, députés, présidents de partis et depuis cinq ans leur mutisme prouve qu'ils ne peuvent nous contredire et que

VERITAS REVELE UNE VERITE OCCULTEE MAIS INCONTESTABLE !

LA LETTRE DE VERITAS, STRICTEMENT APOLITIQUE ET SE FONDANT SUR LA REALITE HISTORIQUE, EST UN DOCUMENT FOLIOLETTAIRE ELABORE POUR PRESERVER LA MEMOIRE DE L'ALGERIE FRANCAISE. ELLE CONTIENT DES DOCUMENTS D'EPOQUE, DES TEXTES ET DES PHOTOGRAPHIES AUTHENTIQUES, ET SOUVENT INEDITS, EMANANT D'ACTEURS DU DRAME DE L'ALGERIE FRANCAISE, DES HIBBOUX EN PONTUELLES SUR LES PSEUDOHISTORIENS QUI SONT, EN REALITE, DES FAUSNAIRES DE L'HISTOIRE. UN ABONDANT COURRIER DES LECTEURS ET UNE MULTITUDE D'ARTICLES DES MEILLEURS HISTORIENS ET ECRIVAINS.

Voulez-vous en savoir plus ?
Ecrivez à VERITAS - B.P. 21 - 31620 FRONTON
ou rejoignez-nous sur Internet
<http://www.veritas-online.fr>

La lettre de Véritas, 48 (December 2000), insert

Appendix I



‘Hommage aux Harkis’, commemorative stamp issued 9 December 1989

Appendices: Questionnaire Responses

From: **Harkis Honneur Histoire, Nasser Sahour (President)**

Received: 7 February 2007 by email

Mademoiselle,

Nous avons bien reçu votre lettre relative à la thèse que vous préparez sur la guerre d'indépendance de l'Algérie. Bien entendu, nous vous retournons le questionnaire complété, et vous encourageons à découvrir cette histoire passionnante, déroutante parfois triste qu'est celle des harkis et de leur famille.

Les rapatriés ont été divers, plurielles, certains aux idéologies condamnables, d'autres aspirés par l'essence d'un humanisme où la paix, l'amour de son prochain étaient les maîtres mots. Cette histoire, celle des harkis rencontre des grands hommes de l'histoire, mais chacun dans son parcours a été meurtri par l'utilisation de ces hommes de leur population à des fins politiques alors que cette tranche de la population française n'aspirait qu'à une seule volonté, celle de rester Française, sans sang ni haine.

L'Histoire commence à montrer les vérités, les hommes continus à mentir, mais l'inexorable et heureusement la page de cette histoire s'écrit avec des preuves incontournables tel que les supports d'images, de témoignages d'hommes et de femmes, elle montre que cette histoire est celle d'un GENOCIDE d'une population entière,

Les harkis, (mouvement), n'appartiennent pas à un idéal, ils sont aussi bien de droite que de gauche, certains ont soutenu même l'indépendance algérienne et pensait rester en Algérie avec leur nationalité française, la France leur a pris cela. Les mémoires collectives n'amalgameront pas les collaborateurs Français de la guerre avec les Harkis, l'histoire retient déjà que les harkis étaient Français au moins depuis plus de Trois générations, les collaborateurs avec le nazisme avait fait ce choix sur le temps même!

Je souhaite que votre thèse présente le génocide fait par l'abandon des harkis par la France lors de l'indépendance de l'Algérie, Je souhaite que vous montrez que les harkis ne sont pas des extrémistes de droite, mais qu'ils ont dans leur ensemble un esprit de laïcité et de lutte contre les déviances, je souhaite que vous ressentiez de celles et ceux qui furent torturés en Algérie, et humiliés en France leur visage, celui d'hommes à qui ont tenté de voler leur liberté et qu'on a souhaité enfermer dans les couloirs des enfants sans nations.

Les harkis aujourd'hui sont pour la France cette population qui démontre que notre grande Nation a dans sa boîte de pandore encore des malheurs qu'elle ne veut pas reconnaître dans sa totalité et qui de ce fait assombrissent sa grandeur.

La France aujourd'hui reconnaît progressivement ses erreurs, ses responsabilités dans les drames passés, il est temps qu'ensemble, nous tirions les conséquences de ces agissements basements politiques sur des populations qui n'aspirent qu'à une seule vérité, celle de vivre en paix.

Les peuples ont droit à leur auto-détermination, chaque identité nationale se bat sur des révoltes, parfois dans le sang, parfois de velours ou parfois même de paix. Retenons que les harkis étaient le trait d'union de cette histoire qui se voulait la construction

d'une paix et d'une identité qui mélangeait l'ensemble de la population de l'algérien, mais qu'au grand malheur de cette même population, terreur, massacre et génocide obligea l'histoire à s'écrire autrement, dans le plus terrible, dans les sillons du sang des deux républiques. n'oubliez que les harkis sont des hommes d'honneur, pas des indigènes imbéciles, qu'ils ont été des combattants de la liberté à Verdun et ailleurs, Monté cassino...

Faites ressortir la fraternité assassinée de l'Algérie Française par l'idiotie des hommes politiques de l'époque.

Merci

From: Amicale des Pieds Noirs, M. Jean Louis Jover (Secretary)

Received: 5 February 2007 by post

1. **Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?**
Notre amicale a été créée en 2002 par un groupe de pieds-noirs habitant Mornas.
2. **Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?**
65 (mais 35 seulement sont natifs d'Algérie, le reste étant des sympathisants)
3. **Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc**
La moyenne d'âge est d'environ 60 ans. Moitié hommes, moitié femmes, surtout les couples.
4. **Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ils ont changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?**
Notre amicale a pour but de nous réunir au moins une fois par mois autour d'un repas (souvent dansant) et surtout nous en profitons pour parler de nos souvenirs.
5. **De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?**
Nous participons aussi à la vie associative de notre village.
6. **Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?**
Nous participons aux commémorations du 8 mai et 11 novembre, aux fêtes du 14 juillet et 15 août et autres fêtes telles que (brocante – fête médiéval – journée provençale – marche de Noël etc...)
7. **Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?**
Non.
8. **Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?**
Non.
9. **Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'Algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?**
Nous avons créé cette amicale en essayant de laisser de côté (religion et politique).
10. **De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?**
Nous nous retrouvons une fois par mois dans une ambiance familiale en essayant de laisser de côté tous nos soucis.
11. **Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différents à ceux de l'autre génération ?**
La 'seconde génération' (nos enfants) bien qu'étant concernés par la vie 'pied-noir' ne sont pas aussi intéressés que nous.

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

Après quelques années assez dures pour notre intégration, je pense que maintenant après 45 ans nous sommes maintenant complètement intégrés. La preuve c'est beaucoup de personnes autre que pieds noirs rejoignent notre amicale et que le nombre d'adhérents augmente d'année en année.

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

Vu notre moyenne d'âge notre amicale ne devrait plus exister d'ici 10 à 15 ans.

From : **Unknown Harki association in Bordeaux**

Received: 1 February 2007 by post

1. **Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?**
2004 par moi même et des amis (e)
2. **Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?**
188
3. **Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc**
Il y a des hommes (majorité) des femmes et des jeunes (18-40 ans)
4. **Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ont-ils changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?**
Entraide de la communauté des Français-Musulmans Rapatriés d'Algérie
5. **De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?**
L'association est jeune (3 ans) mais la communauté est satisfaite.
6. **Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?**
Journée hommage aux harkis – dépôt de geste au monument – hommage à toute les victimes de la sale guerre d'Algérie.
7. **Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d' eux?**
Non, nous ne produisons aucun journal.
8. **Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?**
Oui, d'autre association des Rapatriés d'Algérie – des échanges d'information uniquement.
9. **Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?**
La guerre d'Algérie est présente dans la mémoire de tous ancien soldat de la guerre d'Algérie – il y a traumatisme de tous (sic) un peuple.
10. **De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?**
L'association s'occupe beaucoup des jeunes pour l'intégration dans la communauté française – mais aussi pour leur mémoire pour qu'ils oublient pas leur histoire.
11. **Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l'autre génération ?**
Comme je l'ai dit plus haut, notre travail consiste à intégrer nos jeunes dans la communauté française, dont ils font partie – la deuxième génération est moins traumatisée que leur parents! Sa va de mieu en mieu (sic).

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

Pas toujours – Mais les anciens sont là pour faire comprendre à tous, que la communauté Harkis, est française, européenne, et doit donc être aidé pour son intégration la/en république française dont ils sont les enfants.

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

L'intégration, l'assimilation de notre jeunesse, la/en société française – alors notre mission sera couronnée de succès.

Card attached which reads:

Pour votre travail, je vous recommande vivement de lire le livre de: GEORGES-MARC BENAMOU, sur la guerre d'Algérie – livre édité chez Robert Laffont et qui s'appel *le Mensonge Français*

From: **Cercle Algérieniste des Pyrénées Orientales, M. Jean Scotto, (Vice President)**
Received: 2 February 2007 by post

Mademoiselle

Ci-joint vous trouverez quelques réponses au questionnaire que vous nous avez adressé.
Je me suis permis d'y ajouter quelques documents à l'appui, voir des textes transmis à différents médias.
Nous restons à votre disposition pour des applications plus particulières.
Avec nos souhaits de réussite et nos meilleurs sentiments algérienistes.
J. Scotto

1. Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?

Le Cercle Algérieniste est une association culturelle de FRANÇAIS d'Afrique du Nord avec un président national. Dans chaque région de FRANCE il y a un cercle départemental.
L'association a été créée le 1^{er} Nov 1973 par un petit groupe de jeunes 'Pieds Noirs' à TOULOUSE.

2. Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?

L'ensemble compte 8000 adhérents. Ici, dans les Pyrénées Orientales nous comptons 325 adhérents.

3. Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc

Toutes les classes sont représentées de 40 à 93 ans! Cependant un fort pourcentage d'adhérents est plutôt âgé puisque 45 ans se sont écoulés depuis 'exode d'Algérie.

4. Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ils ont changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?

Les buts sont clairement définis dans les STATUTS que nous vous joignons (DOC 1), les activités sont expliquées sur la plaquette 'Cercle Algérieniste' (DOC 2)

5. De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?

- a) Créée par une cinquantaine de personnes à TOULOUSE nous en sommes à plus de 8000 ! Succès d'envergure.
- b) Reconnaissance nationale de notre existence.
- c) Lutte contre la désinformation de l'action de la FRANCE en Algérie particulièrement.

6. Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?

Événements annuels :

- 1) 26 Mars : fusillade de la rue d'Isly (sic?) à Alger (des dizaines de morts)
- 2) 5 Déc. Fin de la guerre d'Algérie (et non le 19 Mars car après le 19 Mars 1962 les exactions ont continué)
- 3) 5 Juillet : massacres d'Oran (1962)

7. Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?

Oui :

- 1) Chaque mois un bulletin destiné à nos adhérents (DOC 3)
- 2) Tous les trimestres une fonction au niveau national ('l'Algérieniste' ci-joint un exemplaire DOC 4) qui traite d'Histoire, de géographie, d'Art, de lettres, de différents témoignages etc...

8. Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?

Oui, surtout d'autres associations de Français d'A.F.N (nombreuses car chacune se revendique d'une ville, d'un village, d'un quartier, d'une paroisse d'Algérie mais aucune ne développe l'aspect culturel et nous délègue cette représentativité.)

9. Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'Algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?

L'exil, nous a dispersés mais les plaies sont toujours ouvertes sur un passé magnifique et cruel à la base. Le 20 octobre 2007 nous inaugurerons à Perpignan le monument des disparus – Algérie 1954-1963- 4000 noms gravés sur des plaques de bronze, plus les plaques vides des milliers de HARKIS dont nous ignorons les noms. Un acte de Mémoire (DOC 5A, 5B) Nous attendons entre 2000 et 3000 personnes (vous pouvez venir si le cœur avoué en dit!)

10. De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?

Le cercle a été créé pour justement approfondir notre connaissance du passé algérien afin de mieux nous connaître, faire découvrir l'originalité de la culture qui se faisait jour en Algérie, pour diffuser l'œuvre d'écrivains algériens (DOC 6).

- nous donnons régulièrement des conférences sur différents sujets.

11. Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différents à ceux de l'autre génération ?

Disons que les liens entre la première et la seconde génération étaient encore forts, la transmission s'est bien effectuée. Ces relations se sont distendues avec la 3^{ème} génération qui – sans avoir tiré un trait sur le passé – est respectueuse de nos valeurs. Les objectifs restent les mêmes, reste la façon de les appréhender (savoir qui on est pour savoir où l'on va!)

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

La société française ne nous connaît pas, nous ignore souvent : nos relations ont été faussées par la désinformation, de la propagande, des manipulations (voir comment notre communauté a été accueillie en 1962...), perception négative, attitudes politiques qui saisonnent par récurrence, non la société française se refuse à tendre la main...

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

Nous espérons que nos enfants voir petits enfants se souviennent, qu'ils aient une vision juste de ce que fut l'œuvre de la FRANCE dans ce pays, une œuvre réalisée souvent par un peuple original (au contact de l'Orient et l'Occident), un peuple d'hommes et de femmes simples et travailleurs.

(Various association literature included)

From: **Cercle algérieniste de Champagne, Gérard Rosenzweig (President)**

Received: 15 February 2006 by post

1. Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?

Le Cercle algérieniste a été fondé en 1973 par Maurice Calmein à Toulouse. Le Cercle algérieniste de champagne par moi-même en 2003.

2. Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?

Cercle national : 10,000 membres.

Le Cercle de Champagne : 45 membres.

3. Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc

Des hommes et des femmes âgés entre 50 et 70 ans – tous nés en Algérie française et qui sont restés fidèles à leur patrie et à l'histoire de leurs parents.

4. Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ont-ils changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?

- Sauver la culture française d'Afrique du Nord
- Etablir un lien entre les française d'Algérie
- Lutter contre toute désinformation sur notre histoire
- Travaillleur pour la reconnaissance de l'action positive de la France en Algérie

5. De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?

Très peu – les français d'Algérie sont toujours considérés comme responsables seuls des malheurs de leur pays natal – Ce modèle est un mensonge et une caricature d'histoire.

6. Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?

Essentiellement :

- le 26 mars '62 (80 Algérois tués par l'armée française)
- le 5 juillet '62 (800 Oranais enlevés et disparus par l'armée algérienne)
- le 19 mars '62 signature des accords d'Evian

7. Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?

Oui : ci-joint deux de nos bulletins trimestriels.

8. Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?

Oui, avec celles qui défendre les mêmes buts que nous, pour nous rendre plus efficaces

9. Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?

Les 2 sont au centre de notre action – Nous luttons pour une histoire équilibrée de l'Algérie française, et que pour les deux parties reconnaissent leurs fautes et leurs responsabilités – Nous voulons une écriture objective et sans passion de la guerre d'indépendance.

10. De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?

Cette importance est primordiale – Personne ne transmettra la mémoire de notre peuple à notre place. Nous éditons une revue depuis plus de 30 ans pour fournir aux historiens futurs une source d'informations – Nous organisons des congrès et des colloques.

11. Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l'autre génération ?

Nous sommes tous de la 1^{ère} génération – Nous agissons beaucoup aussi pour la génération suivante – Pour qu'elle conserve de ses origines un souvenir objectif et positif et pour qu'elle n'ait pas honte de ses ancêtres à cause de la propagande qui ment sur notre histoire.

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

Pas toujours d'une façon très positive – car nous refusons le rôle de 'bouc-émissaire' que la France veut nous faire porter. Nous refusons d'être coupable de tout. Notre association gêne beaucoup le gouvernement français.

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

Pas beaucoup de choses – Mais nous devons continuer d'agir, jusqu' à notre mort, pour laisser derrière nous les témoignages, les traces et les preuves qui établissent que nous n'avons pas été des bandits et des salauds.

Back page:

Pour mon cas, j'ai 64 ans

- mon père est né en Algérie en 1904
- mon grand-père est né en Algérie en 1875
- mon arrière-grand-père est né en Algérie en 1852
- mon aïeul est né en 1820 à Lwow en Ukraine – il est arrivé en Algérie en 1845

(Tous enterrés en Algérie)

Ils étaient tous des employés ou des ouvriers et pas agriculteurs (= colons) – Ils vivaient en ville et n'ont jamais été bien riches.

Si vous désirez d'autres renseignements vous pouvez m'écrire
Gérard Rosenzweig

(September and December 2006 issues of *L'Algérieniste* enclosed)

From: **Souvenir des Français disparus en Algérie, Christian Gille (President)**

Received: 17 February 2007 by email

SOUVENIR DES FRANÇAIS DISPARUS EN ALGÉRIE

‘Les vérités que l’on aime le moins à entendre, Sont celles qu’il importe le plus de savoir’
(BOISTE)

Le Président Christian GILLE

à Mademoiselle Claire ELDRIDGE. Je vous adresse quelques notes sur la guerre civile dans les départements Français d'Algérie entre 1954 et 1962. Je peux développer ce que vous souhaitez. Gardez en toile de fond explicative les débuts d'exploitations de gisements pétroliers et gaziers qui intéressaient vivement les sociétés américaines et anglaises, ainsi que le souhait des Russes qui espéraient déstabiliser l'Europe en contournant le mur de Berlin par la Méditerranée.

Je me place à votre disposition.

1954. 1er novembre: A 18 heures, la voix des arabes émission de radio installée en Egypte lançait sur les ondes un long communiqué et précisait l'objectif de la guerre de religion qui venait de commencer en Algérie. ‘L'Algérie a engagé aujourd'hui une lutte grandiose pour la liberté, l'ARABISME et l'ISLAM’. Ben Bella, Mohamed Khider et Aît Hamed se trouvaient au Caire, pris en charge par les Services Secrets Egyptiens. Ce jour là, 7 crimes odieux venaient d'être commis en Algérie contre des personnes, qui n'étaient ni des colons, ni des colonialistes.

Deux victimes du 1er novembre 1954 resteront des symboles permanents de la nature des assassinats à venir. Venant de métropole, un couple d'instituteur travaille depuis un mois dans les Aurès. Il voyage ce 1er novembre dans un vieux car qui est bloqué dans un virage près d'Arris par des ‘fellagha’ (coupeurs de route). MONNEROT, Guy 23 ans et Janine 21 ans, sont triés et mis à part au bord de la route. Ils sont européens et cela suffit désormais pour qu'ils méritent la mort. Le Caïd Hadj Saddok, qui voyage dans lui aussi dans le même car, s'interpose en ces termes: ‘vous n'avez pas honte de vous attaquer à ces enfants; ce sont des instituteurs qui viennent pour nous aider’. Une rafale de mitraillette règle le problème. Le Caïd et l'instituteur sont tués; Madame Monnerot abandonnée grièvement blessée, sera miraculeusement sauvée.

Pour ceux qui ont bien connu les populations rurales de l'Algérie Française, ils ne peuvent que retrouver dans le geste protecteur du Caïd, une tradition permanente d'accueil qui existait alors en Algérie, mais aussi un symbole des liens affectueux très particuliers, existants entre la communauté dite européenne de culture judéo chrétienne, et des populations musulmanes très proches de leur culte.

Pour Mendes-France Chef du Gouvernement, et François Mitterand Ministre de l'Algérie, qui connaissent tous deux fort bien l'Algérie, ainsi que Jacques Chevalier député Maire d'Alger, Secrétaire d'Etat, la solution est évidente: ‘ L'Algérie c'est la France, et qui hésiterait à employer tous les moyens pour protéger La France’.

Si les fellagha dans les Aurès, ne représentent au départ que 352 personnes faiblement armées, le Gouverneur Général de l'Algérie ne dispose pour rétablir l'ordre, que d'une cinquantaine de milliers de militaires dont seulement 15.000 de réellement opérationnels. Or le territoire à contrôler équivalait celui de la France. La commune d'Arris par exemple, ne disposait que de 7 gendarmes, pour une population de 60.000 ruraux dispersés dans la montagne.

Jusqu'en 1960, la moyenne restera d'un européen massacré, pour neuf musulmans martyrisés. Progressivement ces derniers qui ne peuvent être protégés nuit et jour par la France contre les crimes du F.L.N., préféreront en nombre croissant, se plier aux exigences des terroristes, et à l'appel pour la guerre sainte qui par principe ne peut se discuter. Ils risquent la prison française, mais ils évitent ainsi (ils le savent tous) les gorges tranchées pour eux et leurs familles.

1955. Nos militaires sont toujours soumis aux règles du 'maintien de l'ordre' et doivent faire appel à un juge d'instruction dès qu'il y a un blessé ou un mort.

Le 21 août, trente neuf localités, un aérodrome, et un casernement de gendarmerie sont attaqués à midi. 171 européens sont massacrés dont 1/3 d'enfants. Le Chef du Gouvernement Edgar Faure assiste à des obsèques collectives. Les familles ouvrières européennes de la mine isolée d'El Halia sont martyrisées: 35 morts dont des enfants de 9 mois et 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, et 16 ans (hommes émasculés, têtes, lèvres membres coupés ; femmes violées, égorgées, éventrées ; enfants têtes éclatées. Le 30 août, 'l'état d'urgence est proclamé en Algérie'. En novembre le Gouverneur SOUSTELLE crée les S.A.S. (Sections Administratives Spécialisées) afin de regrouper et ainsi protéger les populations rurales. Un magnifique travail à caractère social, (construction de maisons et locaux par les hommes, alphabétisation pour tous, travaux de couture pour les femmes, hygiène,.) avec l'auto défense du hameau, entraîne le retour de la confiance, avec la présence nuit et jour sur les lieux d'un jeune officier souvent rappelé.

1956. le 30 janvier Guy Mollet, Secrétaire Général de la S.F.I.O. pendant 10 ans, devient Chef du Gouvernement. Il charge Mendes France d'ouvrir des négociations secrètes avec le F.L.N. Il n'est jamais venu en Algérie, où il provoque suite à la nomination du Général Catroux (qui avait participé à l'abandon du LIBAN) comme 'Ministre résidant' une tempête de mécontentement dans nos anciens départements. Le 6 février une manifestation populaire grandiose accueille Guy Mollet: c'est la journée des tomates. L'ancien syndicaliste est notamment surpris, d'être conspué par des masses populaires, des ouvriers en bleu de chauffe, et non pas par de riches colons ce qui l'aurait laissé indifférent. Il remplace immédiatement Catroux par Robert Lacoste, un politique socialiste et patriote.

Le 11 mars l'Assemblée Nationale au complet vote des pouvoirs spéciaux par 455 voix contre 76 (Poujadiste et droite). Le 18 mars Lacoste déclare 'Il est impossible d'assurer la sécurité des personnes avec les textes de droit actuellement en vigueur'. En juillet une directive de l'Etat Major Général permet d'abattre tout rebelle aperçu une arme à la main, ou suspect s'enfuyant. L'armée peut également procéder à des interrogatoires de suspects.

Le 4 avril l'aspirant Maillot (communiste) livre un camion d'armes au F.L.N. Une partie servira le 18 mai au massacre de 21 soldats originaires de métropole dont 15 jeunes pères de familles.

Le 15 avril le Service militaire passe à 27 mois et 70.000 réservistes sont rappelés

Le 16 octobre le navire ATHOS chargé de 72 tonnes d'armes par des soldats Egyptiens est arraisonné. Le 22 octobre c'est l'avion des chefs rebelles, Ben Bella, Khider, Aït Hamed et autres qui est détourné sur Maison Blanche par l'Armée de l'Air. Le Gouvernement approuve.

Suite à la nationalisation du canal de Suez fin juillet, le 5 novembre nos paras débarquent avec les Britanniques à Port Saïd et Port Fouad. Succès militaire mais grave échec politique. (U.S.A et U.R.S.S)

600.000 hommes sont maintenant sous les drapeaux en Algérie.

Depuis la fin juin des bombes explosent à Alger dans des lieux publics et font de nombreuses victimes. Le 28 décembre Amédée Froger, Président des Maires et grand mutilé est abattu, des bombes explosent même dans des églises, la coupe est pleine et la population réagit avec colère.

1957. 7 janvier: LACOSTE donne les pleins pouvoirs à l'Armée et au Général MASSU pour agir et mettre fin aux attentats commis dans tout l'Algérois par le F.L.N., et à l'interdiction pour tous les musulmans de travailler à partir du 28 janvier à venir au moment où le problème algérien sera évoqué à l'O.N.U.: 'Frères Musulmans, tous les partisans appartenant au F.L.N. auront à détruire et à exterminer tous les européens, y compris les enfants'.

Le 26 janvier interviennent les 66ème, 67ème, 68ème explosions de bombes à l'automatic, cafétéria et Coq Hardi (4 morts, 38 blessés - dont des enfants amputés). Le 17 février les Responsables F.L.N. décident de quitter l'Algérie, mais Ben M'Hidi - qui avait donné l'ordre de l'insurrection en 1954 - pas assez rapide est arrêté et exécuté.

Le 28 février, les paras ont déjà récupéré 87 bombes, 200 kg d'explosifs, 158 grenades. En moins de 6 mois la région d'Alger est reprise en main, les renseignements affluent, et des unités repartent dans les djebels.

Le 4 mars Lacoste annonce la mise en place du D.P.U. (dispositif de Protection Urbaine), et l'Assemblée Nationale renouvelle sa confiance.

Le 24 septembre Yacef Saadi et de Zohra Drif sont arrêtés.

Le 8 octobre à 6 heures du matin la bataille d'Alger prend fin avec l'explosion d'une cache où se terrait Ali la Pointe et 3 terroristes. Les populations algéroises libérées ne savent comment manifester leur reconnaissance. Les Paras ont mis fin en neuf mois aux carnages journaliers de civils de femmes et d'enfants. Ils avaient disposé pour cela des pleins pouvoirs, de la compréhension des autorités civiles et de l'appui unanime des différents groupes de l'Assemblée Nationale.

Les lignes Morice (Tunisie) et Pédron (Maroc) rendent hermétiques les frontières latérales de l'Algérie.

1958. 8 février: bombardement de Sakhiet Sidi Youssef en Tunisie en représailles décidées par le Général Salan. Le Gouvernement Félix Gaillard en position de faiblesse démissionne le 15 avril.

Le 8 mai, 3 soldats français sont fusillés en Tunisie (Sergent Richomme, soldats Decourteix et Feuillebois). Une grande manifestation est organisée à Alger le 13 mai pour rendre hommage à ces soldats que l'on considère comme victimes des positions prises par les intellectuels et les politiques de métropole.

Le 13 mai, en l'absence de Lacoste appelé à Paris, le Gouvernement Général est pris d'assaut. Pour le faire évacuer, le Général Massu doit prendre la tête d'un Comité qui veut imposer au pays, la création d'un Gouvernement de Salut Public présidé par le Général De Gaulle. Dans la nuit, en toute hâte, après 29 jours de palabres pour mettre en place un Gouvernement, Pflimlin devient Chef du Gouvernement et confie au Général Salan tous les pouvoirs en Algérie pour rétablir l'ordre républicain.

Neuf mois après la bataille d'Alger, le Forum sera en permanence jour et nuit pendant 3 semaines, un haut lieu de manifestations patriotiques, sans aucun attentat ni explosion de bombes.

Le 27 mai, le plan résurrection qui prévoyait le largage de parachutistes sur Paris, et l'arrivée de blindés sur la capitale est ajourné. En effet De Gaulle négocie notamment avec Guy Mollet et obtient l'investiture gouvernementale le 1er juin.

Le 4 juin il est à Alger, le 5 à Constantine et Bône, le 6 à Oran où les cris de 'Vive Soustelle' et 'Vive Salan' dominant. De Gaulle ne dispose que de 21 députés à l'Assemblée Nationale n'est au pouvoir que grâce à l'Algérie et peut être renversé dès son retour en métropole. Le même jour à Mostaganem en donnant 'sa parole', et 'au nom de la France' il clame 'Vive l'Algérie Française', et dans son ordre du jour à l'armée confirme la mission des militaires de 'garder l'Algérie à la France et de la garder Française'.

3 mois plus tard, le 28 septembre la constitution est adoptée par référendum. Tous les citoyens de l'Algérie ont voté avec un seul bulletin de vote et l'article 72 intègre les départements d'Algérie avec ceux de la métropole.

Le 23 octobre, il évoque 'l'avenir de l'Algérie en association étroite avec la métropole ' ! , et après Jouhau (sic), le 18 décembre Salan est nommé à Paris. Challe devient Commandant en Chef en Algérie.

1959. 8 janvier: De Gaulle devient Président de la République et par-là même inamovible pendant 7 ans. Il gracie 7.000 membres du F.L.N. dont Yacef Saadi condamné à mort. Dans ses mémoires il expliquera bien plus tard ce que fut sa politique en Algérie en avouant 'Si de but en blanc j'affichais mes sentiments, nul doute que .se fût levé dans tous les milieux une vague de stupeur et de fureur qui eût fait chavirer le navire. Sans jamais changer de cap, il me faudrait donc manœuvrer (sic) jusqu'au moment où, décidément le bon sens saurait percé les brumes'.

En février le Général Challe avec des unités opérationnelles très mobiles suivie de troupes au contact des populations, met en route un véritable rouleau compresseur. Partant en février de l'Oranie et se déplaçant vers le Constantinois, il écrasera la quasi-totalité des terroristes. Fin août, au contact des militaires, De Gaulle déclarera en Algérie 'moi vivant, jamais le drapeau F.L.N. ne flottera sur Alger'.

Le 29 juillet Debré Premier Ministre répondait par écrit au député d'Alger Vinciguerra 'qu'aucune transformation en état de communauté, aucune sécession de la République ne sont constitutionnellement possible'. Pourtant le 16 septembre De Gaulle proclamera le droit à l'autodétermination pour l'Algérie en contradiction notamment avec les articles, 2 (la France est une république une et indivisible), 3, 5, et 72 de la Constitution.

La colère s'installe en Algérie et le doute s'installe chez les musulmans qui ne savent plus ce que veut faire la France.

1960. 22 janvier: Massu qui s'est fait piéger par un journaliste allemand à qui il a confié ses états d'ame est convoqué à Paris. Alger s'organise pour exiger son retour.

Les barricades se dressent au cœur d'Alger le dimanche 24 janvier. Challe s'engage à ne pas intervenir, et pourtant à 18 heures c'est le drame. Sans aucune sommation, le colonel Debrosse charge les civils et les territoriaux armés avec 15 escadrons de gendarmes, et des tirs au fusil mitrailleur interviennent à partir de leur point de départ. Les territoriaux en auto

défense ripostent, et les Paras des colonels Dufour et Broizat n'arriveront que 15 minutes plus tard, mettant fin par leur seule présence aux échanges meurtriers.

De Gaulle par téléphone à Delouvrier, puis Debré et le Ministre des Armées Guillaumat sur place dans la nuit du 26 au 27 janvier, donneront l'ordre aux militaires de réduire les barricades. Les Colonels exprimeront leur refus de tirer sur des Français qui veulent le rester, et d'aller mourir dans les djebels si ce n'est plus pour maintenir notre drapeau.

Pour mettre fin aux barricades, De Gaulle devra déclarer dans un discours pathétique que 'rien ne causerait plus de joie à la Patrie et à De Gaulle que de voir choisir entre telle ou telle solution celle qui serait la plus française'. Le Général Gaulliste Challe sera alors persuadé que De Gaulle souhaite la solution de l'Algérie Française. Il pratiquera un putsch en avril 1961 estimant avoir été trompé, et d'avoir involontairement trompé les populations musulmanes qui faisaient confiance à l'armée française.

Tous les inculpés présents au tribunal militaire de Paris obtiendront la relaxe en février 1961, dont Mourad Kaouah et Pierre Lagailarde députés élus sous l'étiquette 'Algérie Française'.

Du 3 au 5 mars en tournée des popotes en Algérie De Gaulle déclare 'les musulmans ne peuvent être ni des Provençaux, ni des Bretons'. (1ère page du journal Le Monde des 5 et 6 mars 1960. Phrase aujourd'hui raciste, amplement confirmée par Alain Peyrefitte dans son livre c'était De Gaulle).

En avril 1960 Crépin remplace Challe. De Gaulle négocie avec le F.L.N. de l'extérieur et refuse en mai la rédition de Si Salah chef de la willaya d'Alger. Les 3 témoins musulmans de la rencontre avec le Chef de l'Etat seront tués, dont le dernier Si Mohamed caché dans une armoire dans les faubourgs de Blida par les paras de la 11ème demi-brigade mise à la disposition des services spéciaux français.

Du 9 au 13 décembre dernier voyage du Chef de l'Etat en Algérie. Des barbouzes gaullistes du M.P.C. richement dotées s'activent dans les cartiers (sic) musulmans pour les faire manifester aux cris de: 'Vive l'Algérie Algérienne' et 'Vive De Gaulle'. Mais les slogans 'Vive le F.L.N' et 'Vive le G.P.R.A.' prennent le dessus. 119 morts à Alger. De Gaulle mécontent évitera les grandes villes et écouterà son voyage.

1961. 8 janvier: Vote sur l'autodétermination de l'Algérie. Les Français approuvent. Mais si De Gaulle respecte ses engagements il devrait négocier maintenant avec toutes les tendances algériennes et après le retour de la paix organiser le vote en Algérie puis faire approuver le résultat par le peuple Français. Il préfère déclarer le 11 avril 'que la France ne fera nul obstacle à l'instauration d'un Etat Algérien souverain au-dedans et au dehors'.

Du 22 au 25 janvier putsch du Général Challe qui refuse de mobiliser et d'armer les civils, et de faire couler le sang. Au procès du Général Salan, le Général de Pouilly illustrera de façon remarquable le drame des officiers en déclarant 'j'ai choisi la discipline, mais choisissant la discipline j'ai également choisi de partager avec mes concitoyens et la nation française, la honte d'un abandon'.

Sciemment trompés les français d'Algérie sont littéralement effondrés, et savent qu'ils ne pourront plus vivre chez eux. Debré avait écrit dans le courrier de la colère 'l'abandon de la souveraineté française en Algérie est un acte illégitime. C'est à dire qu'il met ceux qui si opposent, quel que soit le moyen employé, en état légal de légitime défense'. Sous le sigle de l'O.A.S. le Général Salan, des officiers, des soldats et des civils incarneront cette légitime défense du territoire national.

Dans son dernier livre, le Général Faivre révèle des propos tenus officiellement le 12 mai 1962 par Christian Fouchet Haut Commissaire: 'Il faut remonter au 16ème Siècle pour

trouver l'équivalent dans les mesures répressives. Ces bouclages (de quartiers des villes européennes) sont donc une espèce de punition collective'.

Le 8 septembre madame SALASC suspectée d'être la secrétaire d'un officier en fuite est affreusement torturée aux Tagarins par les gendarmes du Colonel Debrosse. Mrs Falcone, Bonabe, Garci, Servolle et autres subiront les mêmes traitements.

Dans la nuit du 12 au 13 septembre 258 européens sont déportés au camp de Djorff. Ils ne sont pas poursuivis et donc pas présentés au Parquet. Une femme internée de 78 ans y trouvera le mort dans les bâtiments insalubres et sans eau.

Les 'barbouzes' Gaullistes commettent 'des attentats, des explosions, des meurtres' comme le précisera une note du 18 décembre signée De Gaulle et publiée dans son livre par le Délégué Général Morin.

1962. 18 mars: De Gaulle annonce la signature d'un accord à Evien avec le seul F.L.N. Ne pouvant signer un traité de paix officiel, cela se dénommera 'Déclarations Gouvernementales du 19 mars 1962'.

Saad Dalab Ministre des Affaires étrangères du G.P.R.A. avait déclaré 'tout ira bien si le gouvernement français est décidé à BRISER l'O.A.S.'. De Gaulle écrit le 23 mars: 'mon cher Premier Ministre, Tout doit être fait pour BRISER et châtier l'action criminelle des bandes terroristes d'Alger et d'Oran'; c'est à dire uniquement la résistance des villes à forte densité européenne, et surtout pas les bandes terroristes du F.L.N. qui prennent possession des campagnes et martyrisent nos anciens supplétifs, maires conseillers municipaux et anciens combattants qui avaient fait confiance aux engagements successifs de l'armée Française. Ce même 23 mars le quartier populaire de Bab-el-Oued est encerclé par l'armée, le couvre feu permanent et l'accès interdit à la croix-rouge.

Par solidarité, les populations européennes des autres quartiers manifeste le 26 mars et c'est le carnage. John Wallis dans le Daily Télégraph écrit 'Personne ne semble savoir qui a tiré. Une seule chose est certaine c'est que le premier coup de feu n'est pas venu des manifestants. Les soldats, environ 20 hommes, ont ouvert le feu dans la foule à quelques mètres devant eux'. Autre vocabulaire: 'sauvagerie, indicible brutalité, cruauté sans provocation, atrocités militaires qui n'ont de précédent que dans les répressions de la commune'. En fait 1.135 cartouches de pistolet mitrailleur, 427 de fusil, et 420 de fusil mitrailleur tirées dans un espace de 3.000 mètres carrés environ. Les victimes furent enterrées de nuit. Combien étaient-elles réellement? A noter que la hiérarchie rédigeait 'une demande en urgence de propositions de témoignages de satisfaction pour les gradés qui se sont distingués ce jour là'. 8 jour après le Ministre MESSMER estimait normal de les rencontrer à Courbet Marine.

Réunis à Tripoli du 27 mai au 7 juin le Parlement du F.L.N. rejetait et dénonçait les accords d'Evian et préconisait la poursuite de la revolution, et l'Islamisation.

C'est donc en toute connaissance de ce refus que le référendum en Algérie posait néanmoins comme question unique: 'Voulez-vous que l'Algérie devienne un état indépendant coopérant avec la France dans les conditions définies par les déclarations gouvernementales du 19 mars 1962?'

Neuf mois après l'indépendance, dans deux rapports remis au Président du Conseil d'Etat, M. de Saint-Salvy ancien Contrôleur Général de l'Armée précisait: que du 27 juillet au 15 septembre 1962 furent parfaitement connus d'innombrables tortures et massacres. Il estimait à 150.000 le nombre de musulmans victimes d'un véritable génocide: harkis, moghaznis, anciens combattants, maires, conseillers municipaux et autres francophiles.

14 ans après l'indépendance, dans une note interne, le Général Porret Chef du Service Historique du Ministère de la défense cite comme probable le même chiffre, obtenu à partir de données établies par le Bureau d'aide aux Français Musulmans.

Monsieur André Santini, ancien secrétaire d'Etat aux rapatriés demande toujours la reconnaissance officielle de la disparition de 150.000 harkis et 25.000 européens.

Monsieur Pierre Pasquini, Gaulliste historique, et ancien Ministre des Anciens Combattants, a parfaitement évoqué le massacre de 'plus de 2.000 européens' à Oran le 5 juillet 1962 en présence de notre armée l'arme au pied: 'des femmes françaises furent violées devant leurs maris et leurs enfants, les hommes étaient saignés et laissés dans les caniveaux'.

From: **Association pour la promotion sociale éducative et culturelle du Tarn,**
Received: 20 February 2007 by post

1. **Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?**
En 1975, par Mr ALITEBIB
2. **Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?**
Environ 36.
3. **Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc**
À la fois hommes et femmes, jeunes et âgés, harkis ou non.
4. **Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ont-ils changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?**
Défendre les intérêts matériels et moraux des harkis, ouverture à toute autre personne en difficulté.
5. **De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?**
Avec des locaux fonctionnels, augmentation de l'efficacité pour les questions administratives. Association reconnue au niveau local.
6. **Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?**
Nombreuses commémorations et invitations, concernant les harkis, rapatriés, anciens combattants.
7. **Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d' eux?**
Non, mais nous avons un attaché de presse qui publie des articles.
8. **Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?**
Parfois avec d'autres associations ou avec des historiens, au sujet de projets en commun ponctuels.
9. **Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?**
Rôle majeur puisque notre objectif est de défendre les intérêts des harkis suite à la guerre.
10. **De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?**
Importance extrême – Nous organisons des colloques, des expositions, avec des historiens. Nous avons également produit un film 'Portraits d'union – 42 ans après'.
11. **Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l'autre génération ?**
La 1^{ère} génération est très respectueuse de la République, alors que la 2^{ème} est plus amène par rapport au drame qu'ont vécu leurs parents.

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

L'association est très présente au niveau local et régional. Le Président est convié à de nombreuses manifestations.

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

Grand espoir dans la génération qui arrive, et notamment les femmes, pour parler des harkis. Il y a une culpabilité des hommes par rapport à leur femmes concernant ce drame, et ils ne parlent pas beaucoup.

From: **Association des Harkis de Seine-Maritime (ASHM), M. Ahmed Boutedja (President)**

Received: 24 February 2007 by post

Mademoiselle,

Je vous fait parvenir le questionnaire concernant vos études, j'espère que mes réponses vous aiderons dans votre thèse.

Je vous adresse un livre écrit par la Fille d'un Harki retraçant notre combat de 1954 à 1962 – il s'agit du témoignage de douze de mes camarades et de moi-même.

J'aimerais si possible qu'une fois votre thèse termine même écrite en Anglais vous m'en fassiez porter un exemplaire. Je vous en réglerai le cout.

Bon courage pour votre travaux. Recevez l'expression de mes salutations les meilleurs.

1. Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?

Par moi même en 2001.

2. Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?

Environ 200.

3. Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc

La 1ère génération sont vieux, les plus jeunes 65 ans. La guerre fut entre 1954 et 1962 – peu de femmes quelques souvent ... le Devoir de Mémoire.

4. Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ils ont changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?

Réunir les Anciens Harkis et leurs familles – défendre la mémoire et les intérêts de ces anciens combattants. Apporter une Assistance et assumer une médiation dans tous les domaines à cette communauté.

5. De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?

En nous regroupant nous avons senti que les politiques écoutaient mieux nos doléances et mettaient un frein avec promesses jamais tenues car voilà 44 ans que nous luttons pour une véritable reconnaissance.

6. Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?

Étant Français nous commémorons le 14 juillet Fête Nationale, le 8 mai 1945 Armistice fins des combats, capitulation de l'armée Allemande, le 25 septembre journée Hommage aux Harkis, le 11 novembre Armistice guerre 14-18, le 5 décembre date commémorant le cessez-le-feu en Algérie.

7. Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?

Je vous joint un livre en hommage à quelques vieux Harkis dont je suis – les journaux et publicités trop chères pour nos faibles ressources.

8. Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?

Avec l'UNH qui regroupe les Associations régionales avec qui nous avons deux ou trois réunions annuelles + un congrès dans une ville jamais la même.

Avec AGIR qui englobe les plus jeunes enfants des Harkis dont la majorité sont nés en Métropole.

9. Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'Algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?

Nous sentant Français nous luttons contre le racisme et l'interdiction toujours en vigueur du Gouvernement Algérien nous interdisant un retour vers la Terre de nos ancêtres. Nous ne revenons pas la Terre qui nous vit naître.

10. De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?

Déjà par notre langue, nos coutumes nous nous réunissons, parlons de notre passé, essayons que nos enfants n'aient pas Honte – inculquons le devoir de mémoire à nos enfants petits enfants, en ayant de bons rapports avec les Associations d'anciens combattants.

11. Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l'autre génération ?

Pour moi la seconde génération n'ayant vécu nos douleurs, notre abandon, ont fondé trop d'associations, certaines politisées, donc pas le même discours ce qui fait la force de nos gouvernements pour manipuler et promettre – et rien n'arrive.

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

Il y a plusieurs sont de cloches, certains nous considèrent comme des Traîtres, nos enfants sont souvent bafoués non considérés Français à part entière. Les Français qui ont fait la guerre nous acceptent, et nos gouvernants en période électorale car nous sommes Français par le sang versé.

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

J'espère avant de disparaître, quand il y aura un Accord nous donnant le droit de retour au sol natal au moins pour un pèlerinage et que les dédommagements promis et toujours repoussés nous serons enfin donnés.

(Copy of *Treize Chibanis Harkis* enclosed)

From: **Mr Mohamed Ali SAÏHI, Bercy,**
Received: 27 February 2007 by post

1. Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?

Fondée en juin 1999 par Mr Mohammed Ali SAÏHI (déclaration publiée au Journal Officiel de la République française)

2. Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?

Voir question no. 13.

3. Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc

Il y a 2 catégories: des jeunes couples avec et sans enfants, des personnes âgées.

4. Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ils ont changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?

Il s'agit d'aider des personnes immigrées ou de la seconde et troisième générations dans leurs démarches administratives : quels sont leurs droits et leurs devoirs, à qui s'adresser...

5. De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?

Succès en terme de regroupement familial en termes d'obtention de logement pour une famille, le démarche pour l'obtention d'une pension d'accident du travail pour une personne âgée, immigrés dans les années 60 demandes pour l'obtention de la nationalité française. Aide à la recherche d'emploi.

6. Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?

7. Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?

Non.

8. Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?

Non.

9. Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'Algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?

Étant moi-même, immigré dans les années 1974-1975, j'ai confronté quotidiennement aux démarches pour obtenir tel et tel 'papier'. Je fallait revenir plusieurs fois dans chaque administrations, les renseignements étaient souvent différents, voire même contradictoires. Et encore je parle et j'écris très correctement le français. J'ai donc imaginé les difficultés pour les personnes non francophones et ai voulu servir d'interprète pour les arabophones.

10. De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?

- 11. Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante ‘seconde génération’? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la ‘seconde génération’, comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l’autre génération ?**

La civilisation dont je suis issu a par définition un profond respect pour les plus anciens. Au départ j’ai eu l’occasion d’aider des sous de mon âge (2^e génération) et ai découvert que ce génération avait aussi des difficultés et ne pensait avoir que des devoirs envers le France ou ils ont aussi les droits!

- 12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c’est une perception exacte?**

Notre activité étant tournée essentiellement vers des étrangers et leurs descendants, même s’ils ont choisi par la suite de devenir français est totalement ignorée au moins dans notre milieu, par les Français d’origine!

- 13. Qu’est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l’avenir tiendra pour votre association?**

Pour des raisons personnels l’association n’a plus la possibilité de continuer ses activités bien que le bilan soit, à notre point de vue, positif.

Merci à vous et bon courage pour la suite de votre thèse. Il existe plusieurs bibliothèques à Paris ouverts aux étudiants: Par courrier séparé je vous enverrai quelques adresses.

Meilleures salutations!

From: **Pieds-noirs et enfants de pieds-noirs, Mme Pascale Bagur (President)**
Received: 9 March 2007 by post

Mlle Claire Eldridge

Je suis Présidente de l'association Pieds-Noirs et Enfants de Pieds-Noirs, je vous fais parvenir en return le réponses à votre enquête. J'ai fais passer un exemplaire à chacun de mes membres. Merci à vous de vos interesse à nous.

1. Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?

Mme Pascale BAGUR en 2004.

2. Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?

Nous sommes une vingtaine.

3. Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc

C'est mixte et il y a deux générations, les Pieds-Noirs (60-70) et les enfants de Pieds-Noirs (40-50 ans).

4. Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ont-ils changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?

Faire perdurer la culture Pieds-Noirs au-delà des générations et du temps/et en plus leur faire obtenir les indemnisations auxquels ils ont droit.

5. De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?

Cela a réveillé chez quelques enfants de Pieds-Noirs le sentiment d'aurai une culture propre et d'appartenir à une communauté à part entière.

6. Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?

Nous commémorons trois dates sous forme de recueillement (contemplation) :

- 26 mars 1962 – Massacre de la Rue d'Isli (sic) à Alger.
- 7 juillet 1962 – Massacre d'Oran.
- 5 décembre - date d'uniformité pour la fin de la guerre.

7. Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?

Nous essayons de faire passer des informations par voix de presse locale mais cela est très très difficile.

8. Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?

Nous sommes membres d'une association humanitaire ASAI pour les enfants d'un orphelinat au Sri lanka suite au TSUNAMI. Dont je suis la secrétaire.

9. Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?

Nous faisons en sorte de ne pas oublier ce qu'il n'est passé pas respect pour toutes les victimes, mais nous avançons toujours vers l'avenir.

- 10. De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?**

Par le fait de la faire connaître.

- 11. Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l'autre génération ?**

Notre action doit se faire dans la continuité de la première génération tant en tenant compte de l'évolution du monde. C'est très difficile pour la première génération qui est née sur le continent de se faire reconnaître comme Pieds-Noirs au comme français.

- 12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?**

La société française a une très mauvaise image de la communauté Pied-Noir et sa descendances. Nous ne sommes toujours pas reconnus en tant que français à part entière.

- 13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?**

J'espère que ma communauté ne disparaîtra pas, et qu'enfin nous aurons une place à part entière dans ce pays qui est le notre la France.

From: **Racine Pieds Noirs: Association Culturelle des Français d'origine Pieds-Noirs et de leurs amis, Christian Fenech (President)**

Received: 17 March 2007 via Post

Mademoiselle

Votre lettre du 20 janvier dernier a retenu toute mon attention.

Je suis heureuse de constater combien ce sujet intéresse encore les étudiants et vous félicite pour le choix du thème de votre thèse.

Vous trouverez en retour le questionnaire dûment rempli ainsi que plusieurs documents complémentaires qui vous éclaireront sur notre démarche.

Nous nous situons en effet au plan de la Mémoire et de la Culture pour rétablir dans sa véracité les réalités historiques et sociologiques de l'épopée française en Afrique du Nord. Nous avons souhaité du reste, pour inscrire cette démarche dans le temps, nous adresser à la fois aux aînés et aux jeunes générations, tel pont entre la génération des souvenirs et celles de la Mémoire.

Je demeure bien sûr à votre disposition pour tout éventuel complément d'information ou pour vous rencontrer, ici ou sur Paris (je dois peut-être m'y rendre courant mai pour raison professionnelle).

Je serais resté honoré de recevoir un exemplaire de vos travaux.

Vous en souhaitant bonne réception, recevez, Mademoiselle, l'expression de mes meilleurs sentiments.

Christian C. FENECH

1. Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?

' Racine Pieds-Noirs ' fondée par Christian FENECH en 1999

2. Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?

+ de 200

3. Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc

(cf pièce-jointe)

4. Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ils ont changé depuis que votre association a été fondée ?

(cf pièce-jointe)

5. De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?

Nouvelle approche culturelle et mémorielle.

6. Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?

(cf pièce-jointe)

7. Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?

(cf pièce-jointe)

- 8. Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?**

Oui, participation réciproques aux conférences ou expositions.

- 9. Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'Algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?**

Nous souhaitons rétablir les faits dans leur authenticité.

- 10. De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?**

C'est le but même puisque nous faisons un point entre les générations.

- 11. Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération' ? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l'autre génération ?**

L'approche par rapport aux générations va différer selon que l'on se souvient ou pas. Le but même de notre association est de s'adresser à tous; la moitié de nos adhérents n'est pas née en Afrique du Nord.

- 12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général ? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte ?**

La perception se modifie au cours des années dans le bon sens, mais beaucoup reste encore à faire.

- 13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association ?**

Une approche franche des événements historiques et sociologiques pour le rétablissement de notre mémoire, à travers les jeunes générations.

(Various Racine Pieds-Noirs literature enclosed including a Bulletin d'adhésion, General Assembly programme for 2007, annual financial statement, summary of recent newsletters and an 'organigramme' for the association)

From: **Mémoire d'Afrique du Nord: Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie, Marie-Claire Micouleau-Sicault (Secretary)**

Received: 18 May 2007 by post

1. **Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?**
1994 par Jeanine de la Hogue et Anne Marie Briat
2. **Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?**
Environ 450.
3. **Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc**
Plutôt âgés de 2 sexes.
4. **Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ont-ils changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?**
Mémoire, culture, souvenirs littéraires et artistiques.
5. **De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?**
Bon, succès sur les rapatriés intellectuellement évolués
6. **Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?**
Une A.G en avril
Un déjeuner
Des visites (musées, châteaux etc)
7. **Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d' eux?**
Revue trimestrielle (*Mémoire plurielle*) des fiches biographies.
8. **Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?**
Oui, avec toutes les associations de rapatriés (courriers, activités communes etc)
9. **Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?**
L'association tourne y autour de l'histoire coloniale.
10. **De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?**
Par la revue, nous sollicitons les adhérents de produire des textes, récits, poemes et nous recherchons les textes de grands auteurs sur les colonies françaises.
11. **Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décrieriez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différent à ceux de l'autre génération ?**
Difficiles les liens avec les générations suivantes !! Ils ont d'autres centres d'intérêt, d'autres chats à fouetter.

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

Ils sont encore 3 millions d'individus mais, ils disparaissent peu à peu et ils sont un peu considérés comme des 'has been'!

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

Les grand chose, mais elle le mérite de consoler unpeu les gens chasses de leurs maisons, et de leur aise revivre le passé.

From: ANFAMONA, Yves Sainsot (President)
Received: 27 June 2007 by post

Mademoiselle,

Je réponds volontiers bien que tardivement à votre questionnaire et vous indique que nous nous tenons à votre disposition pour vous rencontrer, sur rendez-vous ou répondre à d'autres questions. Nous sommes en effet particulièrement heureux que notre histoire intéresse les jeunes étudiants au-delà de nos frontières.

1. Quand et par qui était votre association fondée?

Octobre 1956 (notre cinquantenaire est atteint). L'association a été fondée par les Français de Tunisie et du Maroc, juste après l'indépendance accordée à ces deux protectorats. Elle a ensuite accueilli, en 1962, les Français d'Algérie contraints à fuir leur terre.

2. Combien d'adhérents avez-vous actuellement?

4000 environ, sur le plan national, les uns étant rattachés à des sections décentralisées, les autres étant seulement abonnés à notre journal (qui atteignait son cinquantenaire en mars 2007)

3. Comment décriviez-vous le profil de vos adhérents? Par exemple, sont-ils en majeure partie des hommes ou des femmes, les jeunes ou les plus âgés?etc etc

'clientèle' vieillissante dans son ensemble et, naturellement, progression de nombre de femmes par rapport aux hommes (mais sans statistiques précises)

4. Quels sont les buts et les activités principaux de votre association? Et, est-ce qu'ils ont changé depuis que votre association a été fondé ?

Entraide, solidarité, secours mutuel (image de l'ambulance); défense face aux pouvoirs publics (image syndicat); les préoccupations matérielles ont longtemps été dominantes sans être exclusives (l'association est fondamentalement 'généraliste'); depuis de nombreuses années elle s'est ouverte à la mémoire et à la culture; défense et mémoire sont deux domaines aujourd'hui équilibrés.

5. De quel succès sentez-vous que votre association a eu en ce qui concerne la réalisation de vos objectifs?

L'association a enregistré des succès partiels tout au long de son parcours, dans la mesure où les gouvernements successifs ont observé la même attitude à notre égard: accorder le moins possible, le plus tard possible. Pour l'ANFANOMA: Principal succès: l'amnistie, mais il a fallu trois lois! Succès très partiel: l'indemnisation trois, voire quatre lois, cette dernière étant négligeable (forfait 10000f pour la perte des biens meublants : mobilier). Autre succès, encore partiels: les retraites. Long combat, très long: le Mémorial (toujours pas sorti de terre)... Le non à la commémoration du 19 Mars... mais succès partiel et peut-être temporaire; l'hommage aux victimes civiles mais avec en corollaire retentissant l'échec de l'hommage 26 mars / 5 juillet 1962... M Sarkozy a pris des engagements forts sur ce point... Ce serait une grande victoire pour notre association, pratiquement seule à l'avoir demandé.

6. Quelles événements annuels tenez-vous ou dates commémorez-vous? Et en quelle manière?

Participation aux cérémonies locales et nationales : cérémonies patriotiques: 8 mai; 11 novembre; 26 mars; 5 juillet; 25 septembre; 5 décembre plus récemment.

En règle générale, dépôt de gerbe devant monuments aux Morts ou stèles Rapatriés (très souvent installées par l'ANFANOMA ou à son initiative). Certaines de nos sections organisent des sorties, voyages, réunions festives

7. Produisez-vous des bulletins, journaux ou quelques autres formes de publicité? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me donner des informations supplémentaires à propos d'eux?

Un organe de presse, bimestriel qui paraît depuis 1957, journal d'information spécialisé et national. Abonnements et vente en kiosques; un site informatique.

A l'initiative des sections, plusieurs bulletins d'information locaux.

8. Coopérez-vous ou avez-vous des rapports avec quelques autres associations ? Et, si oui, pouvez-vous me décrire la nature de ces collaborations et rapports ?

Autres associations: esprit de coopération et d'ouverture mais assez difficile dans la pratique face à esprit de clocher fréquemment répandu. Attaches étroites avec l'Association des Familles de Victimes du 26 mars 1962 et de leurs Alliés, avec l'Association du Souvenir des Français Disparus en Algérie; coopération régulière avec la Maison des Agriculteurs Français d'Algérie, l'Association des Rapatriés Mineurs au moment du Rapatriement et le Cercle Algérieniste. Bons rapports avec la communauté 'Harkis', notamment AFRONAA et Forces de Police Auxiliaires, U.N.H. et plusieurs autres...

9. Quel rôle sentez-vous que l'histoire de l'Algérie coloniale et, plus précisément, la guerre d'indépendance, jouent dans l'agenda et les activités de votre association ?

L'Histoire de la présence française en Algérie et les séquelles des affrontements meurtriers qui ont ensanglanté l'Algérie de 1954 à 1962 envahissent l'activité de l'association par les nécessaires répliques aux agressions constantes dans les médias, presse écrite, cinéma, télévision, colloques, conférences.

Les manifestations du souvenir et du recueillement jalonnent notre activité annuelle. Nos sections qui résistent le mieux à l'usure sont celles qui organisent une ou deux fois par an des manifestations festives, de détente (de la couronne des Rois au méchoui...)

10. De quelle importance est la préservation, la mobilisation et la transmission de la mémoire dans le travail de votre association ? Et en quelle manière essayez-vous l'accomplir ?

Nous veillons, dans chacune de nos publications à réserver un développement au rappel du passé et à la bibliographie. Mais nous devons accomplir un effort plus important dans ce domaine qui nous tient particulièrement à cœur.

11. Comment voyez-vous les liens entre votre association et la soi-disante 'seconde génération'? Ou, si votre association est essentiellement une tentative de la 'seconde génération', comment décririez-vous votre rapport à la première génération ? Par exemple, voyez-vous un lien de continuité entre les générations, ou voyez-vous vos buts et actions comme complètement différents à ceux de l'autre génération ?

La seconde génération 'Pieds-noirs' peut être considérée comme fondue dans la société métropolitaine tout en gardant une attache forte à ce que nous représentons. Elle n'est pas prête à assumer une véritable relève. Son attitude est très différente de la seconde génération 'Harkie', actuellement dominante. Mais il faut remarquer qu'il ne s'agit pas à proprement parler d'une relève véritable mais d'une nouvelle catégorie, fondamentalement différente.

Des 'ponts' existent cependant lorsque les contacts s'établissent, mais à la marge.

Pour en revenir à la seconde génération 'Pieds-noirs', ceux qui militent s'intéressent exclusivement à la mémoire et écartent en règle générale le rôle revendicatif matériel.

Notre association demeure très attachée à son rôle généraliste et s'efforce de mener le combat sur les deux fronts, ce qui est très lourd.

12. Comment pensez-vous que votre association et les gens qui vous représentez sont perçus par la société française en général? Sentez-vous que c'est une perception exacte?

Les Métropolitains qui nous côtoient, en règle générale sont des sympathisants et ils sont relativement nombreux. Ils respectent nos engagements et parfois le soutiennent. Dans ce dernier cas ils sont même souvent les plus actifs. Ceux qui ne nous connaissent pas nous ignorent, sont surpris de découvrir, d'apprendre... et oublient aussi vite. Il s'agit dans ce cas d'une grande indifférence. Reste le quartier de France profonde résolument hostile, critique qui reste à la légende de l'exploitation et de la dépossession sans vouloir admettre le volet positif qui existe heureusement dans toute action humaine. Cette fraction d'opinion se trompe, souvent volontairement...

13. Qu'est-ce que vous-pensez et espérez que l'avenir tiendra pour votre association?

L'avenir sera difficile. A court terme nous venons de tenter d'approcher les candidats aux présidentielles susceptibles d'être présents au second tour, tous les candidats, sans exclusive. Nous avons sollicité leurs engagements, avec conviction, comme nous l'avons toujours fait. Le candidat élu a pris des positions encourageantes. Nous espérons que les freins dans son entourage ne modifieront ses intentions...

A plus long terme, devrait demeurer une forme de quête de retour sur le passé, de connaissance de l'existence réelle que nous avons menée là-bas, avant les événements tragiques. Les jeunes sont toujours surpris et intéressés par les rapports chaleureux qu'ils découvrent entre compatriotes mais aussi entre Pieds-Noirs et Harkis de première génération. Nous regrettons dans ce domaine les multiples ralentissements et obstacles auxquels s'est heurté le projet de Mémorial (qui semblait au point mort hier encore) Son rôle aurait été essentiel s'il n'avait pas été dévié en dépit de toutes nos interventions et mises en garde.

Le cinéma reste le grand absent. La télévision pour une fois a diffusé voici quelques mois en ce moment, mais au niveau régional et à des heures tardives le tout premier film que nous pouvons qualifier d'excellent 'Les Pieds-Noirs, histoires d'une blessure' (édition d'un DVD par 'Treize au Sud' à Aix en Provence. Souhaitons que d'autres producteurs s'intéressent à ce sujet peu populaire!

PS Dans le cadre de la commémoration de notre cinquantenaire, nous préparons l'édition d'une revue qui devrait vous intéresser, mais elle ne sera prêt qu'à la rentrée. D'ici là nous vous ferons envoyer quelques uns de nos journaux pour vous donner les moyens d'apprécier le climat dans lequel évolue l'association.

Vos contacts :

Yves Sainsot, président

Nicole Ferrandis-Delvarre, vice-présidente (elle-même présidente d'une association, celle des Familles des Victimes du 26 mars 1962) cette tragédie pouvant être comparée sous certains de ses aspects à celle du 'bloody Sunday' en Irlande dont vous avez sans aucun doute entendu parler. Une différence fondamentale toutefois: les manifestants à Alger ont été victimes des forces censées les protéger, les défendre ; en Irlande il s'agissait de heurts entre forces de l'ordre anglaises et manifestants séparatistes. En tout état de cause, un point commun essentiel: des victimes civiles innocentes abattues tragiquement...

(Issues of *France-Horizon* from December 2006 to May 2007 enclosed)

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